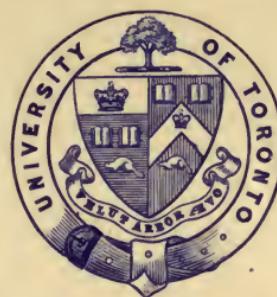


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THE VALE OF ESK,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY WILLIAM PARK,

ESKDALEMUIR.

EDINBURGH:

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD.

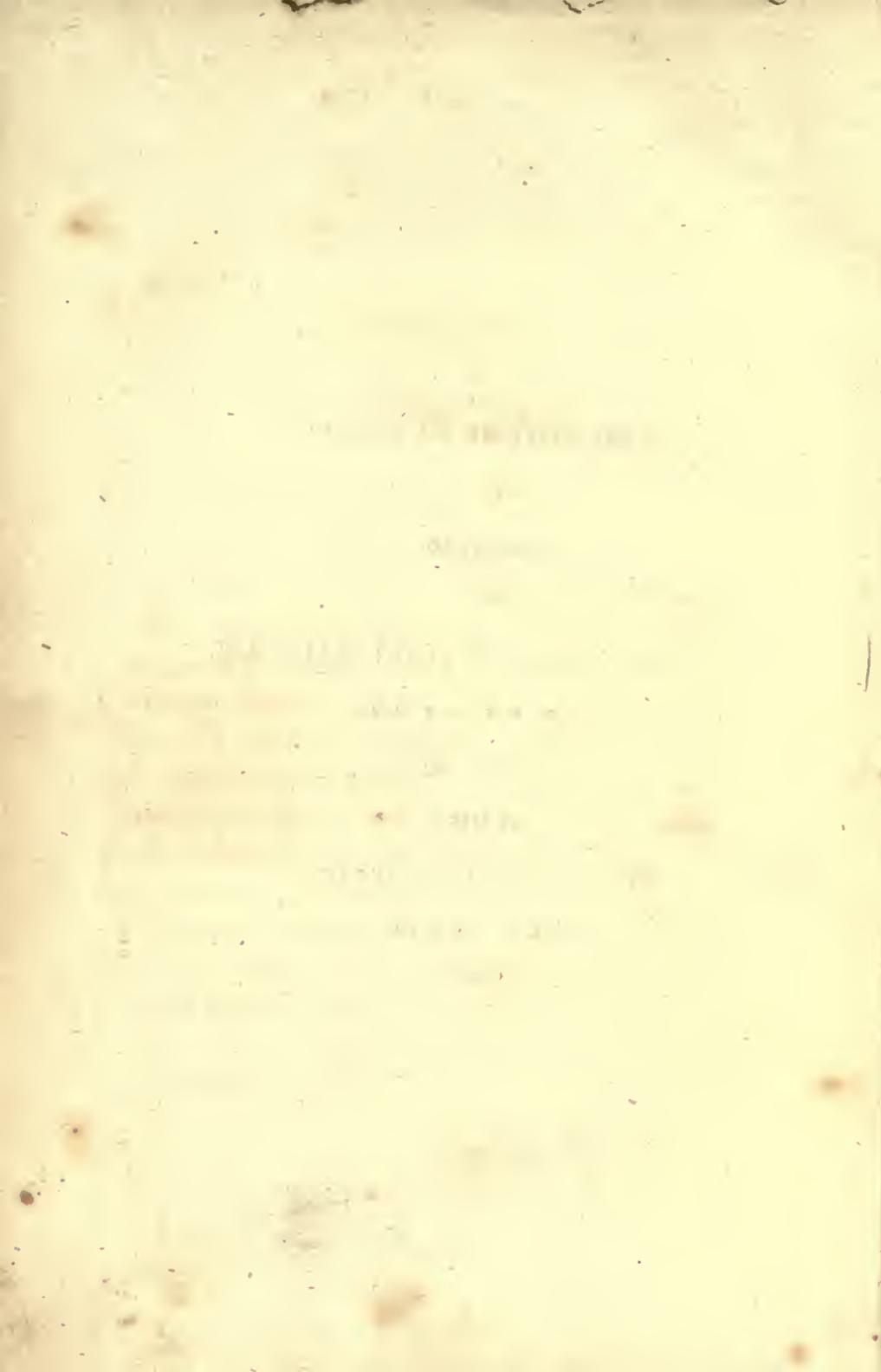
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THIS VOLUME OF POEMS
IS RESPECTFULLY
DEDICATED
TO
MAJOR-GENERAL SIR JOHN MALCOLM,
G. C. B., K. L. S., F. R. S.
&c. &c. &c.
BY HIS
GRATEFUL HUMBLE SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.

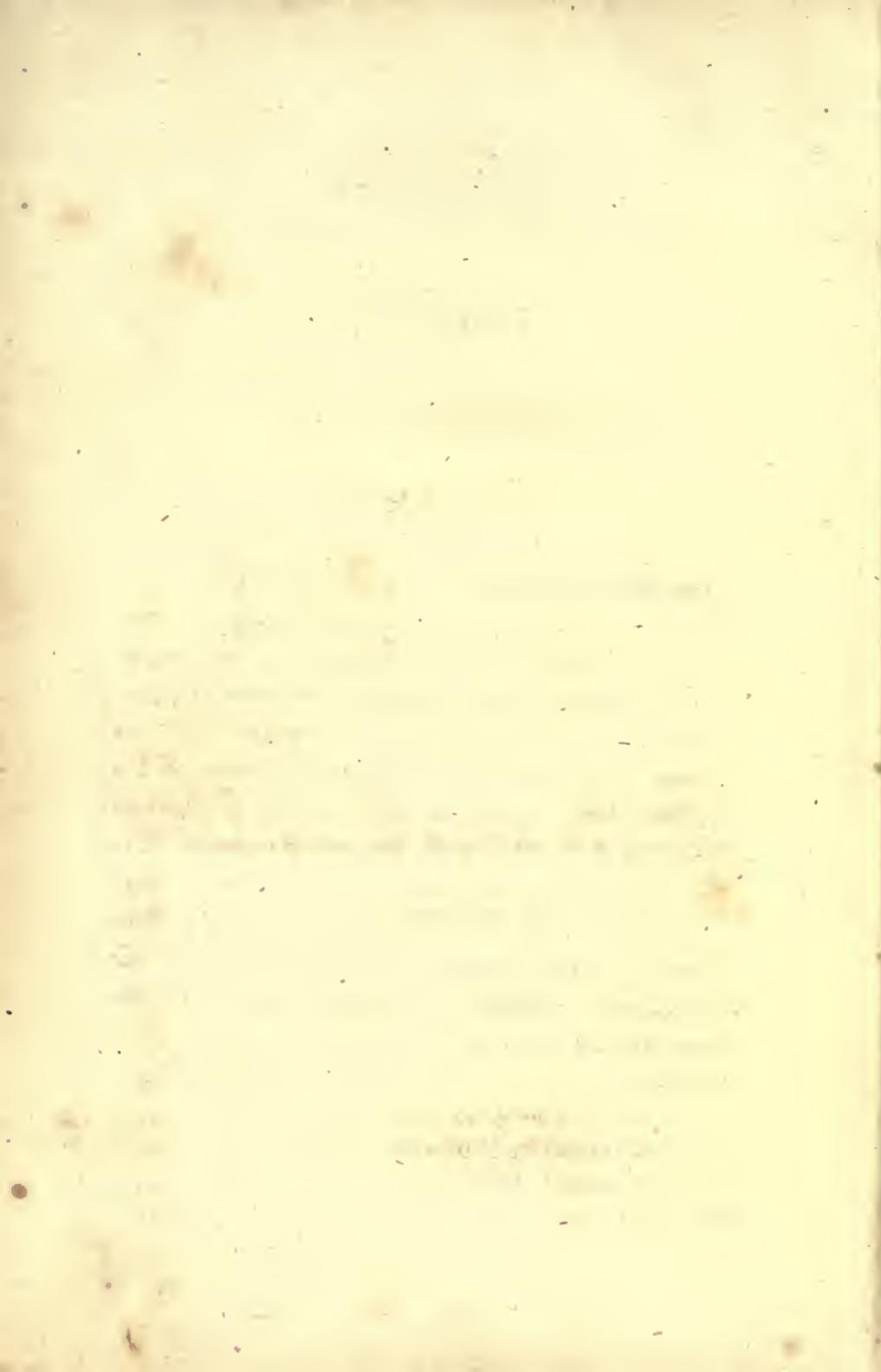


PREFACE.

THE following pieces of verse, several of which have already been printed in various periodicals, were written by a person of small pretensions to learning, or natural abilities, and only during intervals of relaxation from manual labour. The writer is at the same time aware, that with these circumstances his readers have no concern, and that his productions must stand or fall by their own merits or defects. He presents them to the Public, trusting that, however faulty they may be in other respects, they will be found to contain nothing which can either hurt the feelings of individuals, or injure the interests of religion and morality.

WILLIAM PARK.

ESKDALEMUIR BRIDGEND,
April 1833.



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THE VALE OF ESK.

While frequent on Tweed and on Tay
Their harps all the Muses have strung,
Should a river more limpid than they—
The wood-fringed Esk flow unsung?—LOGAN.

I.

VALE of the pastoral Esk—my native vale !

Ye breezy hills, and thou transparent stream,
Adown whose willowy banks at twilight pale

I wander, musing on some mazy dream ;
Where oft, with spirit unperplex'd and hale,

I stray'd in youth, ere care became my theme.—
Transparent stream, high hills and healthful fields,
Receive the homage which my fancy yields !

II.

O, could I from the distant past recal

The fairy scenes that caught my youthful view !

O, could I weave again the golden pall

My fond imagination o'er thee threw,
Lov'd valley ! ere I tasted sorrow's gall,

While yet my heart was young, and life was new,—
My verse should like thy vernal morning glow,
And like thy waters, musically flow.

III.

Sweet vale ! thou'rt fairer far in wisdom's sight
Than the green isles that stud th' Ionian sea,
Though breezes there are bland and skies are bright,
And juicy clusters tremble on the tree ;
And mighty voices from the tomb invite
The traveller to the shores which once were free : (1)
No weeping minstrel, happy vale ! is thine,
To tell the woes of a degenerate line.

IV.

Not the dividing Rhine—not Danube's flood,
That rivals ocean in its mighty swell,
Rolling 'mong storied scenes and fields of blood
Where millions fought, and tens of thousands fell,
And washing ancient walls and ruins rude—
Temple and tower, and batter'd citadel—
Not Danube's flood may claim a loftier strain
Than the pure waters of my native plain.

V.

From their remotest source to Solway's tide,
Beauty in every hue and shape we see ;
Fair is the sunshine on the moorland wide,
And rich the velvet robe of lawn and lea ;
Graceful the grove waves all its plumes of pride,
The hazel-skirted runlet wanders free ;
The simple cot, and wealth's more sumptuous pile
Rise on each hand, and bid the landscape smile.

VI.

Deep is the dell whence, fresh and undefil'd,
The infant Esk bounds on his course away ; (2)
Around the new-born stream, in grandeur wild,
The guardian mountains lift their summits grey,—
Rock upon rock majestically pil'd,
Heaven's architecture that shall mock decay,
And stand erect with undiminish'd grace
When pyramids are shaken to their base.

VII.

Nature puts forth her mightiest efforts there ;
Cavern and crag return the thunder's roar,
Athwart the gloomy glen the lightnings glare,
And, like the dashing sea-wave on the shore,
Beats on the peak that rises bold and bare,
The dark, dense cloud with all its floods in store,—
The cloud is rent, heaven's windows open wide,
And maddening torrents tear the mountain's side.

VIII.

There walks the thoughtful shepherd : well he knows
The signs and silent language of the sky : [snows,
When wakes the north wind, fraught with Arctic
He, the chief priest in nature's temple high,
Can hear the Eolian trumpet ere it blows,
And trace the storm-track with prophetic eye ;
While nightly from their wanderings on the wold
He guides his flock, and shuts the sheltering fold.

IX.

I pass'd his cottage-home beneath the steep;
 'Twas summer-eve, and all around was calm,
Save that the waterfall's wild anthem, deep
 And solemn as the music of a psalm,
Burst forth at intervals with powerful sweep,
 Borne on the half-awaken'd breeze of balm :—
My spell-bound spirit in that tranquil hour,
Religious Solitude ! confessed thy power.

X.

Nor turn we from these upland deserts far
 Till monuments of ancient days appear ;
The imposing vestiges of Roman war—⁽³⁾
 The deep-cut foss, the rampire's triple tier :
For o'er these fields had roll'd the conqueror's car,
 And on that ridge had flash'd the hostile spear,
Ere knowledge to the youthful Isle reveal'd
The treasures in her awful depths conceal'd.

XI.

And, mark ye ! on the river's eastern shore ⁽⁴⁾
 Yon circular stones, by antiquarian sage
Pronounc'd a temple, where foul rites of yore
 Were wont the wrath of demons to assuage :
Oft have its precincts reek'd with human gore ;
 Nor might or hoary hairs, or tender age,
Or birth, or beauty for the victim plead
By blinded superstition doom'd to bleed.

xii.

I've listened to, and half believe, the tale
That when their yearly carnival comes round,
Lit by the moon-beam, bands of spectres pale,
In priestly vestments, and with mitres crowned,
Meet at the mossy pillars of the dale,
And utter many a wild and wailing sound,
Till at the signal of approaching dawn
The visionary pageant is withdrawn.

xiii.

Yet are there scenes of holier interest still, (5)
On which a seraph with delight may look;—
The cloven crag, the hollow of the hill,
The hawthorn shade, the mazes of the brook,
Where the bold servant of his Master's will,
The martyr, who the paths of sin forsook,
And trode in virtue's rough and narrow way,
Found rest and refuge in the evil day.

xiv.

Weary with watching, and with hunger faint,
From friendship's and from home's endearments
Tempted and tried, yet still without a taint [driven,
Of that iniquity 'gainst which he'd striven,
From his cold couch the persecuted saint
Lifted his hope-illumined eye to heaven,
Where, though the world might goodness disregard,
A kingdom should his constancy reward.

xv.

Feelings of awe associate with the place,
 As if the spirit of devotion clave
 Still to its former haunts, and loved to trace
 Through the blue mist the wanderings of the wave,
 Or listen to its roarings round the base
 Of the rude rock that guards the darksome cave
 Beneath whose pall of foam, old legends say,
 In lonely state the Pictish monarch lay. (6)

xvi.

Though silence broods o'er the sequestered spot—
 Only the billows speak—once 'twas not so ;
 The consecrated cairn and rounded moat
 Commemorate events of joy and woe,
 Which ever mingle in the human lot,
 And throw their light and shade on all below—
 Sepulchral heap and grassy mound declare
 That good and ill—that life and death were there.

xvii.

Leave we the reliques sacred to repose,
 To solemn thought and the forgotten dead,
 And onward as the unfettered river flows,
 The widening valley smiles, the hills recede,
 The woodland in the gleam of summer glows,
 And many a happy mansion rears its head,
 While on its airy site the school appears, (7)
 And calls my spirit back to former years.

XVIII.

And where are they who in youth's merry morn
 Of all its little toils with me partook ?
 Who for the nestling searched the prickly thorn,
 And snared the finny tenant of the brook ?
 Or, with dejected mien and look forlorn,
 Suffered the " master's " merited rebuke,
 As mental stores he taught them to provide
 Ere they embarked on life's tempestuous tide ?

XIX.

They nobly burst obscurity's strong bar, (8) [bays ;
 And wreathed their temples round with learning's
 Or rushed amid the revelry of war,
 And shared their leader's perils and his praise ;
 Or, wafted o'er the waves of ocean, far
 From the calm Eden of their early days,
 They float the wealth of Ophir's isles along—
 Heedless of me, and of my idle song.

xx.

Or, have they, strangers to the path of fame,
 Striven with the ills that poverty beset,
 And triumphed in the strife ? 'twas theirs to tame
 More stubborn foes than warrior ever met :
 Though pompous titles blend not with their name,
 And though they own nor crest nor coronet,
 The spirit which their humble hopes upheld
 Is that which states hath saved and tyrants quelled.

xxi.

But, ah ! what names are these on which the eye
 Rests, as it reads the records of the tomb ?
 Here the companions of my boyhood lie—
 Plants of fair promise, blighted in the bloom :
 Their hearts were light as mine, their aims more high,
 Yet I am left behind to mourn their doom.
 The *taught* this token of remembrance crave,
 And duty bids me mark the teacher's grave.

xxii.

Of homely manners, but unyielding mind,
 Caustic and prompt the war of wit to wage,
 Nature his character at once defined,
 Which asked not for the aid of lettered page ;
 In classic skill yet was he nought behind
 The literary leaders of the age.—
 Such the preceptor was to whom I owe
 What little lore these humble verses show.

xxiii.

With pondering on the past my heart is sore—
 O, soothe it with thy song, thou rushing river !
 Tho' change hath stamped his footsteps on thy shore,
 Thy stream is clear, its murmur soft as ever ;
 And still the breeze-bent osiers, as before,
 In the bright mirror of thy bosom quiver ;
 The granite cliff to slow decay may yield—
 Time reaps no harvests on thy virgin field.

xxiv.

Unceasingly along thy verdant banks
The beauteous and sublime for notice call—
The copse that clothes the mountain's swelling flanks,
The cultur'd farm, the high baronial hall
Shaded and shielded by the forest-ranks—
Gigantic ash and fir upright and tall,
And fairer still, the grotto of the glen,
Whose garnish'd courts employ'd my feeble pen. (9)

xxv.

Yet would I linger in Daldarran's bowers (10)
When wakeful birds give welcome to the day ;
Yet would I gaze upon Daldarran's towers,
And intertwine their story with my lay ;
For o'er them all their pristine grandeur lowers,
Whereas coeval things have pass'd away,
And left them a connecting link between
The present hour and ages that have been.

xxvi.

Methinks it were a happiness to roam,
Even to the most forlorn, at dusk or dawn,
In the thick woods that skirt the Ducal dome, (11)
And to inhale the fragrance of the lawn.
(Perhaps the owner of the princely home
By nature's matchless beauties thither drawn,
On Esk's green margin his abode may form,
And to the scene impart another charm.)

xxvii.

Adieu ye decorated hills ! adieu
 Ye shades where meditation hath her seat !
 Adown the valley's flowery avenue,
 Where kindred streams in happy union meet,
 The graceful spire is rising on my view, (12)
 I hear the murmur of the busy street,
 And, hark ! the acclamations of a crowd,
 The shout of joy, tumultuous, long and loud.

xxviii.

I'd shun the field of party-strife ; it hath
 No charm adapted to my spirit's frame,
 And rather climb the shepherd's lonely path,
 As patriots mount the pinnacle of fame,
 And look on hill and hamlet, stream and strath,
 Above, around, below, a fitter aim
 For him who, with the sweat upon his brow,
 Is doom'd to urge the team and guide the plough.

xxix.

More lovely scene than this I gaze upon
 Ne'er smiled before the poet's ardent eye
 In youthful Hellas, abject now and lone,
 Her fame a phantom, and her song a sigh.
 Fancy disporting in the sunny zone,
 Clad in her summer robe of golden dye
 Of od'rous bower and fairy grot, may tell,
 Theme of my lay, thou needest not her spell !

XXX.

From the deep shade of oaks, a solemn fane,
 The Druid Esk emerges to bestow
 Paternal benedictions on the plain,
 And wealth and beauty from his bounty flow ;
 Anon the gloom of groves he seeks again,
 Like wisdom hastening to the house of woe,
 Calm and contemplative ere he dismiss
 His being to the watery abyss.

XXXI.

From the retiring prospect let me turn
 The silvery current of the Ewis to trace ;
 A hundred fountains fill his sparkling urn,
 And aid him with their vigour in the race ;
 A hundred hills, by time and torrents worn
 Into fantastic forms, the dale embrace,
 And lift their heads to meet the morning ray,
 Bold as the Alps, but lovelier far than they.

XXXII.

Where birchen boughs the fragrant bud unifold,
 The hermit Wauchope rolls his “yellow wave,”
 Circling the silent spot, where rose of old
 The palace-fort held by the pious brave, (13)
 The champions of chivalry, enroll’d [save
 ’Mong the proud chiefs whose faith was pledged to
 From Moslem insult and domestic shame,
 The red-cross banner and the Christian name.

XXXIII.

Hillock and hollow still describe the wall
Where scutcheons waved, and battle-trophies grim ;
And still the storied tissue of the hall
Is mimick'd by the grassy tendrils slim ;
But mournfully the forest-echoes fall,
And neither martial shout nor vesper hymn,
Nor beadsman's prayer to patron saint preferred,
Nor Ave-Maria in the dale is heard.

XXXIV.

Yet still the place is hallowed ; for the dead
Of many generations slumber there :
There rest in peace the holy men who fed
The faithful flocks committed to their care ;
And oft, as if by stealth, with noiseless tread,
The sad in soul to the fresh grave repair,
To wet with sorrow's drops their kindred clay,
The tribute which affection loves to pay.

XXXV.

And there it was that Mickle strung the lyre, (14)
The bard, ye grateful dalesmen ! was your own :
How sweet the sounds he wakened on the wire
When Pollio was not, and he wept alone !
How loud he sung of Gama's conflict dire
With spirits of the deep, and seas unknown !
Those tones of warlike rage and melting woe
Still round the poet's home their magic throw.

XXXVI.

If there is music in commingling streams,
If there is majesty in waving woods,
If there is rapture in poetic dreams
Woven amid the sylvan solitudes,
Whose leafy curtan bars the mid-day beams,
If there is grace in nature's loveliest moods,
Then let Arcadia's vaunted triumph cease,
For all her charms are thine, sweet vale of peace !

XXXVII.

Yes, peace and plenty, blest retreat ! are thine ;
They well repay the rustic's patient toil,
Though the fat olive and the fruitful vine
Abjure thy clime and seek another soil :
The years are past when, thronging Discord's shrine,
Thy sons were sworn to battle and to broil,
And courted at the expense of order's laws
The chieftain's favour and the bard's applause.

XXXVIII.

Might I unroll thine annals dark and rude,
And search each record of the "olden time,"
When pride untamed and the long-cherished feud
Gave birth to deeds of courage and of crime.
Full many a tale of rapine and of blood,
The burden of some ancient minstrel's rhyme,
Finds a narrator in the cottage sire,
Or busy matron by the cheerful fire.

XXXIX.

Red blazed the beacon-flame on Liddal's side—⁽¹⁵⁾
 The Cumbrian foemen had begun the foray,
 And loud the spoilers' frantic shouts replied
 In the deep midnight to the wail of sorrow :
 Esk poured his yeomen forth in harnessed pride
 To render retribution on the morrow :
 Vengeance received its due, and Liddal's water,
 Crimsoned with gore, gave witness to the slaughter.

XL.

Kinsman or clansman fettered and immured
 By the revengeful foe in dungeon deep, ⁽¹⁶⁾
 Seem'd a disgrace too dark to be endured
 By the bold Borderer, panting still to reap
 Perilous renown : though ponderous bolts secured
 The portals of the insulated *keep*,
 The adventurous youth lightly the wall o'erleapt,
 And freed the captive while the warder slept.

XLI.

When the black Douglas bands—such is the tale—
 Against their king and country were array'd, ⁽¹⁷⁾
 And many a pennon floated on the gale,
 And glittered in the sunlight many a blade,
 The slogan blast gave warning to the vale,
 Vassal and chief the signal-sound obeyed ;
 At day-break to the fight the warriors rushed,
 And evening beheld rebellion crushed.

XLII.

And oft the dalesman tell, with shame and grief,
 Of the disastrous doings of that morn, (18)
 When on their eastern border Branxholm's chief
 Winded in wrath his doom-denouncing horn :
 Fierce was the struggle on the plain, though brief,
 The plea of right by numbers down was borne,
 Judgment unmollified by mercy dealt,
 And lordly strangers in the valley dwelt.

XLIII.

But ages have swept by, and concord bland
 Woos to her temple-gate and opes the bar ;
 No sound of strife is heard upon the strand,
 The sword is sheathed and mute the trump of war ;
 Yet did ye mount the steed and bare the brand (19)
 When frowned the Gallic victor from afar,
 Sons of the vale ! ye waited for the shock,
 And stood around your homes—a living rock.

XLIV.

And ye who left your glens and mountains hoar
 When duty called you, or when valour led,
 Ye faced the foe on many a foreign shore,
 And for your country's independence bled :
 Where'er the breeze Britannia's banner bore,
 Where'er the cause of human kind was pled,
 Or in the fateful breach, or on the wave,
 Ye gained a name among the bravest brave.

XLV.

When the historic muse from by-gone time
Recalls the glories of the ocean isle,
And writes her triumphs won in every clime
In words more daring than the marble pile,
'Twill be recorded on the roll sublime
Of warrior-chiefs and patriots void of guile,
That they who stood in honour's foremost ranks
Drew their first breath, fair Esk ! upon thy banks.

XLVI.

Not only did they hasten to the field
Where hosts for mutual havoc were arrayed ;
To them in peril's hour their chief appealed,
And called their skilful counsels to his aid : (20)
The nitrous train, in the deep mine concealed,
Burst at their bidding from its ambuscade,
Upon the foe its sudden fury spent,
And the foundations of his bulwark rent.

XLVII.

And he who, labouring for the public good,
Held intercourse with oriental kings ;
Whose genius pierced the murky clouds that brood
Over the fount whence eastern story springs ;
He to whose name the Brahmin, shy and proud,
The tribute of his veneration brings—
His actions in their native lustre shine ;
They ask no laudatory lay of mine.

XLVIII.

Nor need I notice in these strains uncouth
 Him who was sent by merit to preside
 In academic chambers of the south—
 The friend of future nobles, and their guide :
 Though distant from the dwelling of his youth,
 And courted by the sons of power and pride,
 Full well I ween, his frequent thoughts revert
 To scenes which long ago engaged his heart.

XLIX.

And why enumerate those set apart
 By science to promote her splendid reign ?
 Or mention make of him whose mystic art
 Can bind the billows with metallic chain ?
 Or them who charm the ear and win the heart
 With reason's might and rhetoric's flowing strain ?
 To thee, secluded vale ! their birth they owe,
 But on the world at large their lives bestow.

L.

Ye wise and brave ! your glory, like a star,
 Reflects its radiance in your native stream ;
 Your homes, your hills, your deeds in peace and war,
 In after-times shall form the poet's theme.
 " Vale of the Esk."—The words in climes afar
 Have proved a ready passport to esteem.
 Sons of untitled sires ! 'twas yours to gain
 What wealth and high descent sued for in vain.

LI.

Of brighter summers other vales may boast,
Of richer harvests bending in the breeze,
Of commerce gliding swiftly to their coast,
Fraught with the produce of the land and seas ;
But treasures which the virtuous value most—
Mind putting forth her noblest energies,
Truth unalloyed, honour without a blot,
Are found, lone vale ! even in thy lowliest cot.

LII.

Honour to palaces may bid farewell,
And virtue from the public view retire ;
Devotion, waxing faint, may cease to swell
The poet's lay, and dignify the lyre ;
Yet virtue in the rural shade shall dwell,
Honour the unambitious breast inspire,
And meek devotion, till she leave the earth,
Will love to linger on the peasant's hearth.

LIII.

Lov'd vale ! I've seen thee in the flush of spring,
When all thy woods were green and fields were gay ;
I've heard thy farthest glens with gladness ring.
On the still evening of a summer's day ;
I've marked thy fruits in autumn ripening,
And watch'd the season's subsequent decay,—
Pleased with each change, I even loved thee more
When all thy hills the weeds of winter wore.

LIV.

The Laplander, when from his home remov'd,
Of every comfort deems himself forsaken ;
And longings for his father-land, belov'd
Though bleak and barren, in his soul awaken.
The mighty principle hath oft been prov'd,
And in the feeling breast remains unshaken.
No spot on the wide earth so lovely seems
As that which form'd the scene of childhood's dreams.

LV.

The children of the valley who have gone
On errands of benevolence to mankind—
To grace the senate and to guard the throne,
To plant the seeds of knowledge in the mind—
When all their toils are o'er, and laurels won,
And camps and courts and cities left behind—
Shall seek repose and solace in the shade,
Where in the joyous morn of life they stray'd.

LVI.

So, with the dawn, from his strong dwelling-place
Up-springs the eagle, and exulting, soars
Higher than human eye his path may trace—
Above the region where the thunder roars ;
His stretching pinions mete the bounds of space,
The fields of light his quenchless eye explores ;
But when the vivifying ray subsides
Down on his native rock he calmly glides.

LVII.

Nor shall the good, the gifted be forgot,
 Who left the Valley, never to return,
 And died in distant lands, where there was not
 A friend or brother o'er their bier to mourn.
 Though in some lone, unmonumented spot
 Oblivion may rankle round their urn,
 Long shall affection tell their moving tale,
 Long shall their names be sacred in the vale.

M. M.

LVIII.

Thou land of all my joys, of all my care—
 Land of the lofty thought and generous deed,
 Still may thy sons the gifts of fortune share,
 And ever in the steps of wisdom tread ;
 Long may thy plains the smile of plenty wear ;
 Long may thy mountain-flocks securely feed ;
 And baffled be the foe who seeks thy harm,
 With slanderous tongue or with uplifted arm.

LIX.

And O ! may he whose glory gilds the pole,
 And lights the planets in their ample sphere ;
 Who reins the ocean-surges while they roll,
 And curbs the whirlwind in its wild career ;
 Whose word can calm the tumult of the soul,
 And with celestial hope the bosom cheer—
 Command his angels round the Vale to stand,
 And hold it in the hollow of his hand.

LX.

Then, though destruction's shaft may fly by day,
And deadliest plagues, sprung from the womb of
night,
May rise with all their terrors in array,
And onward march a sinful world to smite ;
Though from the city joy should pass away,
And music's voice no more to mirth invite—
Though woes abound, thou shall escape them all,
Vale of my home ! no ill shall thee befall.

AN EVENING IN THE LATE MISS WILHELMINA
 MALCOLM'S MUSEUM, BURNFOOT.

Miss W. Malcolm's Museum, the subject of the following Poem, is usually called the "Cottage." It is built on the steep bank of a small rivulet which runs into the Esk, close by the site of an ancient "Birn," one of the remnants of Border warfare, which are not uncommon in the district of Eskdale. The opening verses of the poem contain an attempted description of the surrounding scenery. It is unnecessary here to give any account of the large collection of interesting curiosities which the cottage contains; but a few explanatory notes are subjoined, where the subject of the author's reflections is only obscurely alluded to, rather than distinctly mentioned.

DELIGHTFUL cot ! embosom'd in the wood,
 Where Contemplation dwells with Solitude,
 To thee these unpretending strains belong—
 Be thou the subject of my artless song.

In such a place of rest on summer eve
 'Twere sweet the web by fancy spun to weave,
 When Nature's varied beauties bloom around,
 And all thy banks, fair Esk ! seem fairy ground.
 The frowning mountain rising high and hoar,
 By wintry torrents cloven to its core ;
 The tuneful woodland rob'd in richest green ;
 The valley forest-girt, and dimly seen ;

The fragrant fields, the music-murmuring brook ;
The wild-flower blushing in each shelter'd nook ;
The river hastening to its southern goal—
Such sights, such sounds give rapture to the soul.

But rather let me spend the evening hour
In musing on thy wonders, magic bower !
Beneath thy roof what splendid proofs are plac'd
Of manly enterprise, and female taste !
How many distant lands have lent their aid
To deck thy walls, sweet Cottage of the shade !
From high Imaus, where the glacier gleams,
To Andes, gilt by freedom's morning beams ;
From cliffs of Thule, winter's throne of gloom,
To Lybian wilds, swept by the fell Simoon :
The records of antiquity's dark day ;
The elegance which modern years display ;
The tribute of bright realms where Science smiles ;
The offerings of ocean's loneliest isles ;
The boasted workmanship of Art divine,
And Nature's rarest gifts, rich Bower ! are thine.

The Laplander, whose landmark is the pole,
And o'er whose cavern'd home rude tempests roll ;
The naked negro, nursling of the sun ;
The huntsman in Columbia's forest dun ;
The passionless Hindoo, the fierce Malay,
The sordid son of mercantile Cathay,
The Persian proud, the renovated Greek,
Whose classic soil far-wandering pilgrims seek,—

Earth's numerous tribes, the fettered and the free,
Temple of Concord ! seem to meet in thee.

Strange thing it is to see in Scottish bower
A fragment of the wreck of Babel's tower, (1)
That wonder of the world's primeval day,
The den where mighty Nimrod rent his prey.
What fund of thought that simple stone supplies !
Fame's eldest born in dusky vision rise ;
The massive monument of impious pride
That awed the earth, and the high heaven defied.
Frowns to the fancy o'er Euphrates' banks,
A rallying mark for Ham's disparted ranks.
How many centuries of change have pass'd
Since first its shade o'er Shinar's plain was cast !
How many crowns have crumbled to decay !
How many living forms return'd to clay !
In speech united, and in aim combin'd,
Boundless ambition fir'd the human-kind ;
Their might surmounting every mortal bar,
'Gainst the Supreme they wag'd their guilty war :
The Ruler of the sky look'd down, and saw
The foul dishonour cast upon his law ;
He spake, rebellion ceas'd, and men were driven
In wide dispersion to the winds of heaven.

Ah, mighty Babylon ! how fallen—how low !
The joyous queen hath drain'd the cup of woe :
Where are her walls of strength, her stately towers,
Her lofty portals, her aerial bowers !

Their very ruins whelm'd in ruin lie,
Asham'd to meet th' inquisitorial eye :
The silence of her tomb no voices break
Save those which feelings of dismay awake ;
The owls of night their doleful notes prolong
Where peal'd the plaudits of the loyal throng ;
And where the sun of regal splendour shone
The wild beasts of the desert make their moan.

These forms which hold the symbols of command,
Of senseless stone fram'd by the artist's hand, (2)
From the abyss of distant years recall
The pageantry of Khosroo's capital ;
The martial shew, the banquet and the feast,
And all the pomp of the voluptuous east.
Birth-place of fancy, and romantic dreams,
Where Poesy hath found her loftiest themes !
Land of delights ! of every charm possest,
Save liberty, to heighten all the rest ;
Swift as the whirlwind's flight the spoiler came,
The champion, not of freedom, but of fame ;
Three battle-fields check'd not his red career,
And Iran fell before his lifted spear.

Must royalty repel aggression's shock ?
Then let it rest on Freedom's living rock :
Unstable is the power that tyrants rear ;
That throne shall fall whose chief support is fear.

Lo ! the false gods who homage claim'd erewhile
In gorgeous temples on the shores of Nile ; (3)

The deities whom Egypt's cruel lord
In blindness of idolatry ador'd.
Proud prince ! o'er learning's earliest home he reign'd,
But folly's fatal spell his soul enchain'd :
'Twas his the circling seasons to divide,
'Twas his to rein the river's rolling tide ;
Yet nought of the great Governor he knew
Who bade the sun his measur'd course pursue,
Whose bounty swell'd the fructifying wave,
And plenty to the plains of Goshen gave.

Brief was the time when Truth's unsullied ray
Flash'd o'er the nations universal day ;
Her star had set in superstition's cloud,
And men to falsehood vile allegiance vow'd.
Then was it, under tyranny's misrule,
That Israel's tribes were train'd in misery's school ;
Th' oppressor shut his ear to pity's tale,
Nor might the prophet's warning voice avail,
Till the Omnipotent to judgment rose,
And pour'd down all his plagues upon his foes,
Cover'd the gods of Egypt with disgrace,
And forth in triumph led his chosen race.
Though now the sons of Jacob sackcloth wear,
Because their heritage is waste and bare,
Yet is the welcome era on the wing
When Zion with a shout shall hail her king ;
When all her outcasts from afar shall come,
And on her holy mountain find a home.

But not again shall independence smile
On hoary Memphis, or the shores of Nile ;
Egypt hath fall'n no more to rise, her name
Is blotted from the register of fame ;
The stranger's banner o'er her fields shall wave,
And ever shall her soil sustain the slave.

Dark was the doom pronounc'd on Hammon's line,
And still beneath its pressure million's pine,—
The tribes that tenant Afric's arid soil,—
Children of crime and ever-during toil—
Bright is the summer of their glowing zone,
But there the sun of science never shone ;
And that more potent Sun, whose healing ray
Can cheer the soul, and dissipate dismay,
(Whose holy light our happier land o'erflows)
Above their dim horizon never rose.

No peaceful arts their sullen minds employ—
In slaughter skill'd, ingenious to destroy,
Well-pleas'd to discord's revels they resort ;
Their business strife, barbarity their sport.
Even in this peace-pervaded solitude
I, shuddering, view their instruments of blood ;
The ponderous club to deal the deadly blow,
The quiver, and the tough elastic bow,
The feather'd shaft with barbed iron tipt,
And in the venom of the aspic dipt.
But see afar, in Senegal's deep bay,
A ruthless band more savage still than they !

Yon bark whose pennon woos the fragrant breeze
Comes not to lighten human miseries :
The sons of gain have Heaven's denuncements dar'd ;
They crowd the strand, for blackest crimes prepar'd,
Marking their prey upon the upland spread,
As hell-fiends watch the dying sinner's bed :
And now the worse than death-doom'd ones are torn
From home, from hope, and o'er the billows borne.
O, that some spirit, ardent and sublime,
Might, phoenix-like, arise in Afric's clime !
Some genius form'd on virtue's noblest plan—
Born to assert the sacred rights of man !
In council wise, invincible in war,
A Washington or greater Bolivar. (4)
O ! for some heart, some hand untaught to yield,
Angola's future destinies to wield ;
To prop with giant strength the sinking cause
Of nature, and avenge her broken laws ;
To launch the bolts of patriot-ire abroad,
And scatter freedom's foes—the foes of God !
Or, rather you, ye heralds of the cross !
Who spurn the earth, and count its riches dross,
Upheld by Him whose arm is strong to save,
Impart those succours that the needy crave ;
Proclaim the message of the Prince of Peace,
And Mammon's reign, and Moloch's rites shall cease.

On the dim canvass here would fancy trace
The tale of Mexico's imperial race, (5)

Presented in apt symbols to the eye,—
Rude forms of animals that walk or fly ;—
The language taught in nature's simple school
Prior to art or arbitrary rule.
Haply the record tells of triumphs won,
Of deeds by Roman daring ne'er outdone ;
But vainly the inquiring mind essays
The search of truth in doubt's perplexing maze.
Had science,—rather than remorseless war,
And avarice, to worthy deeds a bar—
Enthusiastic, left her native shore
The western world to visit and explore,
Then should the brave who slumber with the base
Among immortal names have held a place,
And proud events, that mark the march of time,
Have shed their lustre through Columbia's clime.
The love of gold—society's worst bane,
Impell'd the fierce Castilian o'er the main,
His bosom against fear and pity steel'd,
And all the demon in his soul reveal'd ;
And thrones were stricken down, and kingdoms rent,
And ruin overspread a continent.
Th' intruders triumph'd, but their boast was small ;
Their victory proved the prelude to their fall ;
Fate's whelming surge that round the Andes boil'd
In fury on Iberia's shore recoil'd ;
The crown of pride is trodden in the dust,
And awe-struck nations own the Almighty just.

Mark here a mouldering relic from the urn
Of him who freedom earn'd at Bannockburn ! (6)
Nor is there aught besides in this sweet bower
That o'er the patriot's heart can hold such power :
To the frail token from the tomb obtain'd
How many lofty sentiments are chain'd !
Its spell can visions of the past awake,—
The brave of other years their slumbers brake ;
Their changeless hatred of the tyrant's sway,
Their firmness unimpeach'd in peril's day,
Their noble purpose, “ Albyn shall be free ! ”
The battle-field, the shout of victory,
Glory's bright blaze o'er Scotland's mountains cast—
More of the present seems than of the past.
Let hireling slaves the despot's power proclaim,
And columns raise to force ephemeral fame ;
Such purchas'd honours shall in shame depart,
But lives the Bruce in every freeman's heart.
When shall some kindred spirit burst the chain
That galls the slave on wild Sarmatia's plain ;
Or in th' Italian's bosom fan the fire
That warm'd to heroism his Roman sire ? (7)

Behold an object worthy to appear
By the pale ore that gleam'd on Bruce's bier !
That ornamented vase, dug from thy soil,
Hellas ! bespeaks the artist's pious toil :
In it repos'd the ashes of the brave
Whose blood had dyed the blue Egean wave,

On that remember'd morn when glorious Greece
Won on her wooden walls the wreath of Salamis.

Hard were the task, though pleasant, lovely Cot !
Thy treasures in their full detail to note :
To thee the East hath render'd up her store,
To thee hath golden Burmah lent her lore ; (8)
Rich robes, whose lustre emulates the day,
Their airy texture from thy walls display ;
And costly trappings, once the pride of kings,
Amid thy garniture seem common things.
Even foemen to forsake their feuds agree,
And yield the weapons of their strife to thee ;
The blood-dim'd scimitar, and deadly *cris*
Innocuous hang in thy abode of peace ;
And the broad battle-axe, the Briton's boast
In bygone years, hath all its terrors lost.
The breathing-stone that grac'd the Grecian dome,
The rich Mosaic from Pompeii's tomb ;
Etruscan urn, and ancient Roman bust,
Are here deposited—a sacred trust.

Palace of thought ! thy varied scenes pourtray
The dawn of power, its progress, and decay :
At this untroubled hour thou seem'st to me
A true compendium of man's history.

Nor less thy wealth, enchanting Bower ! supplied
By nature's hand from all her empire wide ;

Whate'er, among the tribes that skim the deep,
Or those that haunt the forest or the steep,
Arrests attention, or excites surprise,
Here, under nice arrangement, meets the eyes.
But chiefly these in beauty's garments drest,
The plumy children of the south and west,
That revell'd in the mangrove's grateful shade,
And sung to soft repose the woodland maid.
The sparkling mineral, the painted shell,
The coral branch from ocean's lowest cell,
The shining amber, dug from gelid cave,
The pearly gem, the produce of the wave,—
All from these teeming shelves aloud declare
The matchless skill that gave them form so fair.

Here order reigns ; and here the ardent mind
Semblance of that approaching age may find,
By holy bards in eestacy deseried,
When harmony shall human conduct guide ;
When kings from every clime shall disavow
Their rivalries, and in one temple bow.

While some the cup of sordid pleasure drain,
And mix in folly's unreflecting train,
To reason deaf, to nature's beauties blind,
Void of the charms that grace the female mind,
Thy garnish'd courts, fair edifice ! may claim
For her who made them smile a nobler name.

And they, whose names are grav'd on honour's pale,
The brothers who have left Esk's fairy dale,
When from the toils of field and flood remov'd
To rural ease, and scenes in youth belov'd,
Oft shall some token, while they ponder here,
Recall the doings of their past career.

Farewell, sweet Bower ! for evening's shadows pale
Stoop from the sky, and darken all the vale ;
'Tis night, save that a feeble glimmering falls
Upon the warlike symbols round thy walls.
And lo ! the shades of ancient heroes come,
To make these solemn halls their nightly home :
On the thin haze that wraps the mountain's side,
Their awe-inspiring forms majestic glide ;
They come—the proud, the sceptred ones of old,
'Mong their memorials watch and ward to hold :
Pre-eminent amid th' aerial band
Appears the guardian spirit of his land,
The Bruce—well-pleased to witness what he won,
Descending unimpair'd from sire to son.

Sweet Bower, farewell ! and cease my wandering
On fancy's faithless current borne along, [song !
O'er fallen towers, and fetid fields of war,
Far from my theme—from Esk's green borders far.
So from some central mount, that to the skies
Lifts up its head, a river takes its rise ;

At first a nameless brook ; anon become
A rivulet, it leaves its lofty home ;
And swelling still, divides the distant plain,
Before its waters mingle with the main ;
Yet the far-wandering stream, the infant rill,
Receiv'd an impulse from its native hill.

1830.

EPISTLE TO A FRIEND,

SUGGESTED BY CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE
HISTORY OF HIS LIFE.

I ASK no muse to guide my trembling hand,
Thy candour only, Pollio, I demand ;
Deem not my censure harsh, my motive vain,
Feeling may paint, but Friendship prompts the strain.

When from the top of Contemplation's mount
We gaze on life, and balance the account
Of good and ill writ on its chequer'd page—
Youth's towering hopes, and care-encumber'd age—
'Tis then with earnest accents we exclaim,
Spurn earth, immortals ! seek a nobler aim !
Though doom'd a pilgrim, o'er life's waste to roam,
Yet here, O weary man, thou may'st not have thy
home.

How many woes beset the feeling heart !
What helpless numbers bear misfortune's smart !

What scenes of sorrow meet the pitying eye !—
Virtue degraded—vice exalted high ;
Folly in luxury's gaudy garb array'd,
And modest merit shivering in the shade ;
The brightest prospects in disorder lost,
And joys departed that were valued most.

I need not ask thee, Pollio, if thou hast
Experienc'd disappointment's withering blast ;
If e'er adversity's dark-rolling tide
Hath swept thy hopes of happiness aside ;
If schemes dear to thy heart, well-form'd and fair,
Have, like a vision, vanish'd into air.
Say, didst thou in anticipation, stand
With kindred souls, on Fancy's fairy land ?
Where genius should increasing powers display,
Free as the light, and rapid as its ray ;
From scenes of care and trouble far remov'd,
Pleas'd with each object, and by all belov'd ;
Far from the den where Discord's weapons ring,
Where dark Detraction points her poison'd sting,
Where Envy breathes her pestilential breath—
Foul as the grave, and fatal, too, as death,
Beyond the reach of selfishness and guile ;
Where every face should wear a cheerful smile.
Alas ! to mortal man it is not given
To realize on earth the joys of heaven.
T'was thine to build an airy world of bliss,
But fate, relentless, call'd thee back to this.

Perhaps the course thou purposed'st to steer
With Heaven's wise government might interfere ;
Perhaps it led through danger's noisome field,
Through paths where strong temptation lay conceal'd :
The acquisition of th' ideal prize
Haply involv'd some awful compromise—
The barter of integrity for ease—
The dereliction or of truth or peace—
A sad adieu, a long, a last farewell
To the lov'd land where friends and kindred dwell.
If future honours sparkled in thine eye,
If pleasure woo'd thee with her syren-sigh,
If lust of power within thy bosom wrought,
If wealth allur'd thee—wealth oft dearly bought—
Then Heaven all-wise, the purpose would disown,
And lead thee in a way thou hadst not known.

Left to ourselves, alas ! where would we stray ?—
Let Providence decree, and man obey :
Cheerful obedience best promotes our views,
And disappointments ev'n may have their use.
Vicissitudes of fortune nerve the mind,
Correct our follies, and our passions bind ;
Teach our desires, our thoughts, our hopes to rise
Above this troubled scene, and centre in the skies.
So the extremes of temperature reveal
The latent virtues of the ductile steel,
Its fibres, soften'd by the breath of fire,
In the cool stream their proper strength acquire.

Methinks, if erring mortals aught might know
Of perfect happiness, while here below,
'Twere to be found in some lone isle afar,
Whose shores ne'er echoed back the shout of war ;
Where never yet Ambition's footsteps trode,
Nor Tyranny in guilty triumph rode :
Free from fantastic Fashion's galling chain,
Under Simplicity's primeval reign ;
While Spring should ever on its vallies smile :—
'Twere bliss to breathe the air of that lone isle.

Not that the raving tempest's rage I fear,—
Its voice is music to the pensive ear ;
Not that stern winter's icy touch can chill
The glowing breast, and fancy's frenzy still :
Dearer to me the gale whose ruthless wing
Despoils the grove, than softest sounding string ;
More dear the storm's wild hymn, the cat'racts call,
Than peals of mirth that shake the banquet-hall.
In nature's changing aspect still we trace
The lineaments of grandeur, or of grace ;
And all her varied works, when view'd aright,
Convey instruction, or afford delight.
'Tis man, the suicide, that aims the blow
At his own peace, and wakes the wail of woe ;
He makes the wild a smile of pleasure wear,
Or turns Elysian bowers into a desert drear.

Twin of the tiger, fell unsparing man !
'Tis thine to thwart kind Providence's plan ;

When nature lifts her fond parental voice,
And calls on all her children to rejoice,
Her fond parental call why wilt thou scorn,
And force aggriev'd humanity to mourn !

'Tis not the scourge that guilty nations fear,
Wide-wasting war, with famine in the rear ;
'Tis not the heartless despot, thron'd in pride,
Ador'd by slaves, by poets deified ;

'Tis not the fool, contemning sense and worth,
That calls these merited reproaches forth :
No ; 'tis the moral murderer, whose aim
Is to calumniate, traduce, defame ;

The jealous, envious wretch, who frets to see
His neighbour wealthier, happier than he ;
The hypocrite, with timid eye askance
Shrunk back from virtue's overpowering glance ;

The double man, whose heart with hate is wrung,
While honey'd speeches issue from his tongue :
Such are the foes of peace, the foes of truth ;
These ruffle age's brow, and blight the bloom of youth.

War's trumpet-tongue bids mustering hosts prepare,
But envy digs the pit and spreads the snare ;
Ambition stretches thousands on the plain,
But bloodier malice boasts her tens of thousands slain.

'Tis no o'ercharged, distorted picture this—
I've shown the man of malice as he is ;
The dark description which my verse supplies,
Experience too fully verifies.

Yet are there minds of happier, nobler frame,
Souls lighted up at honour's ardent flame,
Who hold the maxims of the age in scorn,
And follow truth when by the world forsworn :
Sweet, verdant spots amid the moral waste
On which the traveller's aching eye may rest !
So smiles th' oasis in Numidia's land,
While all around is bare and barren sand ;
So shines the starlet through a parted cloud,
When heaven and earth are wrapt in midnight's
shroud.

My lay is plaintive, Pollio, yet excuse
The wanderings of the melancholy muse ;
Nor deem the gloomy aspect which she wears
Meant to repress thy hopes, or rouse thy fears :
Blame not thy destiny, nor mourn thy fate
Because thou mayst not pass Fame's palace-gate :
For thee retirement all her sweets supplies,
Nature her pleasures, stript of art's disguise.
What, though dark clouds o'erhang life's dreary vale,
Where tempests beat, and human voices wail ;
Though griefs and pains the good man's path sur-
round,
And thorny cares the feeling bosom wound ;
To the sad soul wisdom her law reveals,
Which from the high and haughty she conceals.
Are there not favour'd hours when pensive minds
Hold mystic converse with the subtle winds,

Interrogate the visionary forms
That roam the wild, or revel in the storms,
And, when the thunders roll and lightnings fly,
Draw inspiration from the troubled sky ?
The melancholy man at twilight hour
Owns the sweet season's spirit-soothing power ;
Day's empty pomp to him no peace affords,
The cloud of eve with sadness best accords :
When all th' external world is hush'd to rest,
A calm congenial fills the mourner's breast.
O ! then his thoughts, erewhile on sorrow bent,
Traverse uncurb'd creation's wide extent ;
The thunder's path where burning bolts career,
Each silver star in its resplendent sphere,
The chambers of the east, replete with light,
Unveil their glories to his mental sight.
Mounted on fancy's wing, he soars away
To wilds of air where sparkling comets stray,
To worlds hid from the optic-aided eye,
Proclaiming loud their Lord's immensity,
While gazing on the bright orbs as they roll,
He marks the master hand that moves the whole,
Discerns the great Lawgiver in his laws,
And traces causes to the parent cause.
O'erpower'd with the stupendous theme, he turns
His thoughts back on himself, and droops and
mourns ;—
Guilty of crimes which force an angel's tears—
The slave of passion, and the sport of fears—

A creature of the dust, a child of clay—
Destined to tread life's stage—and pass away.
Yet let not levity nor callous pride
Contemn the mourner, and his woes deride ;
Better to share his pleasure and his pain,
Than mingle recklessly in mirth's gay train.

And he, who now beneath night's welcome pall,
Weaves the wild verse at friendship's stirring call,—
Thick congregated clouds of sorrow shed
Their influence dire, and settle round his head ;
Save when some vision, bright as morning's beam,
The gloom dispelling, casts a casual gleam.
Yes, moments come, when fancy's meteor-light
Scatters the shadow of my mental night :
'Tis hope triumphant over fell despair,
A triumph transient as the lightning's glare ;
Full soon th' illusive splendour dies away,
And all my soul is dark, without one cheering ray.

But wherefore talk of trouble, tears, and toil,
Of soaring fancy, or of nature's smile ?
Poor is th' enjoyment earth-born pleasure gives,
And light the woe from which the grave relieves ;
The wish that terminates with life is vain ;
Feeble the tie that death can rend in twain.

Fair is this earth, and fertile are its fields,
Ample the stores of wealth which ocean yields ;

Proud is the pageantry of high command ;
Much priz'd the boon bestow'd by royal hand ;
Grateful the meed of praise when nobly won,
The tribute due to generous actions done ;
And sweet the morning dream of love and youth,
When woman's eye reflects the ray of truth :
Yet, why should pleasure's sparkling cup allure ?
The draught when most refin'd, is still impure ;
Disgrace shall brand the coroneted chief,
And cold oblivion sear the laurel leaf :
Nor may imperial power, or India's wealth,
Parry the stroke of fate, or purchase health,
Much less the conscience of the culprit calm,
Or, for the wounded soul procure the needful balm.
"Vain and insipid"—Well might David's son
Thus stigmatize the splendid race he'd run :
"All, all is vanity," the preacher cries,
"And, all is vanity," each fleeting hour replies.

Where then, among the works divine, oh ! where
Exists an object worthy of our care ?
Where shines the glorious prize, our being's end,
To which the longings of the soul may tend ?
There is, although by mortal eye unseen,
A sun without a cloud—a sky serene ;
There is a land which nought of sorrow knows,
A fount whence joy's broad stream for ever flows ;
Society whose only tie is love,
For toil-worn travellers a rest above.

To that fair clime, th' abode of life and light,
Thy soul, O man ! would wing its upward flight ;
An exile now on time's sin-troubled strand,
Thy hope, thy home is in the heavenly land.
So far'd the dove, commission'd from the bark
That bore the heaven-protected patriarch :
Our race's second sire had hop'd in vain ;
Still roll'd th' unfathomable, shoreless main ;
No cheering land-mark rose above the deep ;
Down, down sunk Ararat's majestic steep ;
O'er all his hoary cliffs the billows curl'd,
And chaos frown'd where once had smil'd a world.
The bird of peace, bewilder'd and dismayed,
From the dark air the dreary scene surveyed,
Then to the only sanctuary of rest
Sped with assiduous wing, and palpitating breast.

DAVID'S ELEGY

ON THE DEATH OF SAUL AND JONATHAN.

THE strong are fallen in the ranks of war ;
 Quench'd is the light that stream'd from Jacob's star :
 The prince of Israel's warriors, and the pride,
 Dark Gilboa ! on thy day of havoc died.

O, tell it not in Gath, thou vaunting foe !
 Tell not in scorn the tale of Zion's woe ;
 Proclaim not in proud Askelon abroad
 How Israel fell, forsaken of his God.
 Why should Philistia's dames their powers employ
 In frantic strains of sacrilegious joy ?
 Why should Astarte's hostile temple ring
 With shouts of triumph o'er the fallen king ?

Ye pregnant clouds withhold th' expected shower !
 Nor fall, ye balmy dews, at evening hour !
 Pour not your fatness down, as from an urn,
 On Gilboa's mount when vernal months return ;
 Refuse to aid the labours of the swain,
 Nor clothe the parched clod with waving grain.

For Israel's monarch on thy battle-field,
 Ensanguined Gilboa ! dropt his useless shield ;
 That shield to heathen foes become a spoil,
 As though it shone not with th' anointing oil.
 Through war's thick cloud the sword of Saul had
 gleam'd,
 And noble blood its lustre oft had dimm'd ;
 The shaft of Jonathan, with vengeance tipt,
 The frequent field with battle's wreck had heaped :
 Their course was swifter than the eagle's wing,
 Their fury fateful as the lion's spring :
 In life united, deathless deeds they dar'd,
 And one dark death of shame, alas ! they shared.

The harp, ye weeping maids of Shiloh ! take,
 And bid its sadly-soothing sounds awake ;
 At solemn eve, your olive-groves among,
 Pour forth the sorrows of your souls in song :
 Lament for Saul—he who from conquest bore
 The gems and purple robes which once you wore ;
 For now no more ye triumph with your chief.—
 Wear, weeping maids ! the sombre garb of grief.

Where is the guardian of thy hallow'd land ?
 O Israel ! Where thy patriotic band ?
 How are thy generous sons—the good—the brave—
 Toss'd like the foam on battle's stormy wave !
 But chiefly thou—possessor of my breast,
 O Jonathan ! my early friend—my best !

‘Twas thine the power of sympathy to prove—
Stable as truth—stronger than woman’s love.
Firm was the tie our kindred souls that bound,
And fell the fate that such affection found :
Not valour could stern ruin’s stroke repel,
Nor virtue shield thee when thy country fell :
On thee my fondest thoughts I’ll still bestow ;
For thee my fruitless tears shall ever flow.

What canst thou boast ? thou desolated land !
The shiver’d spear—the bloody, broken brand ;
Thy sons are fallen in the ranks of war,
And dark eclipse hath cover’d Israel’s star.

CASTLE-O'ER.

“ On the farm of Yetbyre is a very complete encampment, of an oval form, named Castle-o'er, or Overbie. The general opinion is, that it is a Roman camp, which communicated with those of Netherbie and Middlebie; and that the difference of form may have been occasioned by the situation, it being placed on the top of a hill, where the square form could not be adhered to. The name of Overbie, or Upper Station, favours this opinion. There is scarcely a hill within sight of it, on which there is not some vestige of an outer encampment. From Castle-o'er, a communication, by encampments of this kind, can easily be traced down the Esk to Netherbie, on the one hand, and down the Water of Milk to Middlebie, on the other.”—(Sir John Sinclair's Statistical Account of Scotland, vol. xi. p. 614. Art. Parish of Eskdalemuir.)

THE sun is set, and the autumnal wind
 Strays o'er the dusky landscape unconfin'd ;
 From the forsaken camp that crowns the hill
 Its hymn is heard, fitful, and wild, and shrill,
 As if a quire of pensive spirits there
 Mingled their voices with the evening air.
 While thus I listen, darkness deeper grows,
 The shades in thicker folds around me close ;

The mountain-ridge presents an outline dun,
 But in the valley Night hath victory won.

While thoughtful, up the steep ascent I climb,
(Clomb by the warriors of the olden time,) Far in the west the crescent moon peers forth, Modest and meek, like unassuming worth ; Again she hides her head ; the vapours dim, Again condensing, shroud the welcome beam ; Alternately the light and shade prevail, As intervenes the haze, or sweeps the gale. So mortal greatness and imperial power Burst on the view, and blaze their little hour, Till luxury, dark-lowering like a cloud, In foul eclipse the fleeting splendour shroud.

Lo, now the trace of Roman might appears, Magnificent amid the waste of years ! How awful rise these ramparts on the sight, Wrapt in the deep solemnity of night ! Pregnant with proud defiance still they seem, Like hoary warrior frowning in his dream ; The gloomy pomp of arms they still display— Strong in their ruins—fresh in their decay. Now Fancy comes, and summon'd by her spell, The cohorts crowd their airy citadel ; While from the hollow foss rings in her ear The pickaxe of the toiling pioneer : The hum of armies on the wind is borne, The watchman silent treads, or winds his horn ; The wavering smoke-clouds from the altar rise, Fraught with the odours of the sacrifice,

And lo ! the leader of the shadowy band
High on the dizzy rampart takes his stand ;
The clouds are parted, and the moonbeam pale
Gleams on his glittering helm and bufnish'd mail ;
He waves his faulchion, and the ranks around
Wait his behest with reverence profound.
The words were big with war : the howling blast
Echoed the awful accents as it past ;
While the close phalanx on the mount array'd
Murmur'd assent—and melted into shade.

Hence march'd of yore the iron legions forth
To quell the rising spirit of the north,
When Freedom, maddening at aggression's tale,
Flung her bright banner on the mountain-gale,
Lit up her signal-fires on cliff and tower,
And sternly waited battle's fateful hour.
Here too, return'd from all his perilous toils,
The weary veteran stor'd the hard-won spoils :
Free from the cares that civil life annoy,
He gave his heart to military joy,
When victory swell'd the lofty note of war
That Grampian echoes wafted from afar.
Then in the days of merriment and glee
He'd course the bounding red-deer on the lea ;
For the lean wolf the artful gin prepare,
And pierce the wild-boar in his miry lair :
He'd rouse the goat—the tenant of the rocks,
And from the thicket drag the milk-white ox,

Entwine his horns with garlands from the grove,
And yield him up—a grateful gift to Jove.

Thus would the soldier spend his chequer'd life,
When glory call'd not to the field of strife :
Yet often would he gaze upon the goal
Whence started for the prize his ardent soul ;
Sweet scenes of youth would pass before his mind—
Bright visions of the land he left behind,
Where grandeur at the shrine of wisdom knelt,
Where all the magic power of song was felt.
Oft would he muse, far in the misty wild,
On his lov'd home where sunbeams ever smil'd,
And sigh, amid the wintry tempest's roar, [shore.
For Tiber's cultur'd banks, and Latium's tranquil
Ah ! little deem'd he that, in after times,
The muses would forsake their native climes,
And find, with Art and Science in their train,
A peaceful home amid the northern main.
He wist not that each slope and sylvan glen
In his wide view—the haunts of barbarous men—
When centuries of change their course had run—
Should spread its yellow harvest to the sun.
Nor might he deem that Albion's arm should wield
Marcellus' sword, or heave Cunctator's shield ; (1)
Or firmly grasp the sceptre of command,
That soon should drop from Cæsar's palsied hand.

Long, long, imperial Rome ! thy banner flew
Triumphant on these hills of dusky hue ;
Long the rude tribes that in these valleys stray'd
Their foreign lords reluctantly obey'd.

Ye who the progress of improvement trace
Through all its steps among the human race !
Say not, our Isle a needful boon obtain'd
When polish'd conquerors her sons enchain'd :
'Tis better far to range the greenwood free,
Than for a palace barter liberty.
The naked Briton, ignorant but brave,
Knowledge acquir'd—and knew himself a slave ;
The steer and steed came under his control,
But innate energy forsook his soul ;
The stranger's splendid garb his limbs array'd,
But independence was the price he paid.

Yet fate the conquering arm of Rome confined ;
In the dark sky of power her star declin'd :
The world once more was destin'd to be free,
And the hoarse war-trump hail'd the jubilee.
From wall-girt China revolution's flood
Roll'd to the farthest west its waves of blood ;
Forth from her fens and forests Scythia pour'd
Her warrior-shepherds—horde succeeding horde :
A hundred kings the roving myriads led,
The nations in a hundred battles bled ;
But not a name to glorious deeds allied
The city of the Scipios supplied ;

Virtue and valour from afar had come
To win the wealth, and check the crimes of Rome.
As when the genial winds of April blow,
And sunbeams with increasing radiance glow,
The river, freed from winter's deadening spell,
Comes leaping joyous down the woodland dell,
And beauty and fertility restores
To the pale turf that spreads along its shores ;—
So hope returning on seraphic wing,
Breathes o'er the ice-cold heart the balm of spring ;
So flowers of moral growth, fair as the morn,
The banks of freedom's living stream adorn.
And hope re-kindled in the Briton's eye—
For liberty may droop, but cannot die—
Again her bards the harp of heroes strung ;
Again her banner on the breeze was flung :
Chiefs of high name, the offspring of Fingal,
Muster their bands before the foeman's wall ;
The hostile wall a feeble barrier forms
To foes unyielding as their mountain-storms ;
Its proudest height the bold avengers scale,
Or, with its wreck bestrew the level vale :
Onward they rush, to their great purpose staunch,
Resistless as the falling avalanche ;
The gory eagle with undazzled eye
No longer soars in victory's cloudless sky :
No more the joys of conquest Rome may know—
Fort after fort is yielded to the foe ;

Nor may thy bulwarks, Corda ! stem the tide (2)
Of freedom rolling in its native pride ;
Thy trembling lords resign their lengthen'd sway,
And leave thee to Barbarians—or decay.

Such the eventful tale of former years ;
But now the Camp a milder aspect wears :
When with the dawn the shepherd wanders forth,
He treads where trode the conquerors of the earth,
And basks at noon, heedless and unconcern'd,
On the green mound where heroes lie inurn'd.
No warlike splendour beams from Corda's towers,
No revelry disturbs the silent hours,
Save when at shady eve the Fairy tribe
In rapid march the mystic ring describe ;
Or when creative fancy from the tomb
Calls up the steel-clad chivalry of Rome.
Ye sons of power ! whose voice goes forth a law,
Who from your thrones inspire the world with awe,
O ! could ye shut your ears to courtly praise,
And learn the lesson which this scene conveys !
Where are the mighty at whose mandate rose
This massive wall to fetter Cæsar's foes ?—
Or, if they dimly flit before the view
Across antiquity's dark avenue,
Where are the daring youths of humbler name
Who left their household gods in quest of fame ?
In vain they follow'd glory's upward path,
In vain they courted hardships, toils, and death ;

Their name, their deeds that claim'd the poet's lay,
By Time's devouring stream are swept away.

Since change is stamp'd on every thing below,
And power, like ocean's tide, must ebb and flow,
Is there a day of fast-approaching date,
Recorded in the secret book of fate,
When Britain's flag, the pole-star of the brave,
On Calpe's⁽³⁾ war-worn cliffs shall cease to wave ?
When Britain's host, no more to honour true,
To India's sun-lit shores shall bid adieu ?
When her bright-beaming star shall sink in shame,
And kings no longer tremble at her name ?
Or, may her sons avert impending doom ?
Shall future wreaths around their temples bloom ?—
Then let them wash away oppression's stain,
And from the Ethiop's neck unbind the chain ;
Justice demands the deed with voice austere,
While mercy drops the interceding tear.

October 1831.

THE TRIUMPH OF PLENTY.

The following allegorical rhymes were suggested by the peculiar character of the season in which they were written, 1831. The spring was dry and barren, boding scarcity of food, both for man and beast: the summer, one of the best on record: the harvest, very favourable and abundant.

ON the mountains of Albyn, romantic and wild,
Where peace long had flourish'd, and happiness smil'd,
Like the voice of the tempest that booms from afar,
Was heard the hoarse murmur of armies and war.

In the loneliest, loveliest isle of the sea,
Over Albyn, the wave-washen soil of the free ;
O'er her forest-girt plains and her mountain-land gray
Had Plenty establish'd his fatherly sway ;
He had peopled the wide-spreading upland with flocks,
And sent forth to the valley the labouring ox ;
The bounty of autumn, the beauty of spring
Had increas'd under Plenty, the patriot king.

But he left, in a frolic, the home of his youth,
To visit the vine-cover'd hills of the south :
By the Po and the Arno he wander'd a stranger,
Nor knew that the land which he lov'd was in danger;
He wist not that foemen their banners had planted
On fields where his footsteps in childhood had haunted.

There were signs in the heaven, and omens on earth,
Ere the ills that afflicted our land had their birth ;
An arch most stupendous, to science unknown,
Of a pale, lifeless hue, o'er the night-sky was thrown ;
Portentous of doom and disaster to man,
Our isle it embrac'd in its vapoury span.
When evening was come, and the valley was still,
The shepherd who guarded the fold on the hill
Had witness'd vast armies in uniform bright
Perform all the dread evolutions of fight ;
And swiftly would spread the astonishing tale
Of the warriors brac'd in aerial mail. [deep,
There were moanings at midnight, unearthly and
Like the voice of the winds when they war with the
steep ;
And phantom processions of funeral woe
In the glimmering star-light mov'd solemn and slow.
Grim monsters were born, if fame truly reported,
With members mis-shapen and features distorted ;—
What fear they excited, and mortal surprise,
When speech flow'd from their lips,—fire flash'd from
their eyes !

One wild warning they'd utter of forth-coming woes,
Then their mouths would be mute, and their eyelids
would close.

How soon were their sayings of mystery solv'd !
How soon was our land in disorder involv'd !

'Twas the lord of the Lybian wilderness—Thirst,
Who flew to the foray, the fiercest—the first ;
A proud, ardent spirit, sublim'd by the sun,
On perils and pains 'twas his pastime to run.
'Mong the men of the wild he had long been renown'd ;
The wreath of the victor his temples had bound ;
But stern was his bearing and harsh his control,
Unalter'd his purpose, unyielding his soul :
The rude Bedoween had come under his ban,
He had ruthlessly plunder'd the rich caravan ;
From the mouths of the Nile to the Moon's rocky belt
His fame had extended, his power had been felt ;
To Sheik and to Sultan, to Bey and Bashaw
His name was a terror, his mandate was law :
He mock'd at destruction, he jested with fear,
While he ran uncontroll'd his impetuous career ;
He had bask'd in the glow of the vertical beam,
He had bath'd in Zahara's illusory stream ;
He had breath'd the hot breath of the deadly Simoom,
When o'er him was spread its pavilion of gloom ;
Round his forehead had flicker'd the sulphurous flash,
And dear to his ear was the thunder's dread crash ;
On his couch had the blast of the wilderness blown,
And the whirlwind had swept round the base of his
throne.

In regions remote from the traveller's ken
He had ransack'd the red dragon's noxious den,
And with the pestilence walk'd hand in hand
Through valleys of salt and o'er mountains of sand.
But he heard—while he wept for a still wider sphere
To gild with his glory—to shroud with his fear—
He heard that the guardian of Albyn was gone,
And he came with his bands from the fiery zone,
(Rous'd up by ambition's delirious dreams)
To conquer the land of green meadows and streams.

Nor, with Thirst and his furious warriors alone,
Must Albyn contend for her freedom and throne :
The forests and fields of the far-distant north
Their hordes, under Hunger, to battle sent forth—
Fell Hunger, familiar with strife from his youth,
Unaffected by fear, unacquainted with ruth ;
The prince of the pole's hyperborean borders,
Where thron'd on an ice-berg he issued his orders.
His power was deep-rooted, despotic his sway,
And proud was the pomp of his warlike array ;
On the hills of his fame like a giant he strode,
While thousands of tremblers proclaim'd him a god ;
And bards, in the depth of their mystical lore,
Could trace his descent from the thunderer—Thor.
He had gather'd his laurels on Lapland's bleak strand,
'Mong Norway's dark pines he had muster'd his band;
And his banner had flapped on the Doffrefeld high,
Like a ravenous bird in the pale wintry sky.

'Gainst the Briton, on daring discovery bent,
The tyrant had all his malignity spent ;
The sailor his haughty forbearance would crave,—
Unrivall'd he rode on the wild polar wave.
Green Erin beheld his array on her coast,
And her dastardly nobles deserted their post ;
They reck'd not though ruin's broad wave o'er her
broke,
They parted with honour, and shrunk from the shock.
But for Albyn's rich spoils he incessantly sigh'd—
Fair Albyn, of ocean the pearl and pride,
With her valleys in spring's gayest garniture drest,
And her hills gently fann'd by the breeze of the west.
He thought on his kindred who slept in her clay,
He ponder'd on Largo's disastrous day ;
And revenge bade him wash from the red page of story
The disgrace of his clime, and the Islanders' glory.
He mutter'd a prayer o'er his ancestor's grave,
And he enter'd at midnight the sorcerer's cave,
And the ministring fates, amid darkness and gloom,
Conferr'd on his sword its commission of doom.
Then darken'd the northern armada the main,
As of yore when it bore the piratical Dane ;
And Albyn forsaken, her terror avow'd,
When it lower'd o'er her shores like a storm-boding
cloud.

There was woe on the mountain, and war in the plain ;
The remonstrance of pity was utter'd in vain ;

Stalk'd Hunger abroad like the angel of death,
With the wreck of humanity strewing his path ;
But chiefly his vengeance and malice accrues'd
On the city's broad mark, like a hurricane burst.
It irks me to mention the towns he attack'd—
How they yielded at once, or stood out and were sack'd :
Wherever the ill-omen'd Raven was rear'd,(1)
Dismay and despair 'mong the Islesmen appear'd ;
And the wailings of sorrow were heard in the street,
And the gloom of the grave shrouded gaiety's seat,
And fearful forebodings of exquisite woe
Abounded ; for fierce were the threats of the foe.
Thrice happy is he who surrenders his life
Amid valour's thick ranks in the battle's brief strife !
But woe to the wretch who in darkness and chains
Must suffer captivity's lengthening pains !
And miseries unheard-of before, or elsewhere,
The captives of Hunger were destin'd to bear ;
The screw, and the rack, and the torturing wheel
To them would their manifold horrors reveal.

While city and borough by Hunger were batter'd,
The followers of Thirst, by agreement, were scatter'd—
Like a cloud of the morning by winds split asunder—
In bands to the landward, for havock and plunder.
Descended from Ishmael the wild and the free,
Bold archers they were of the highest degree ;
Their shaft was unerring, and fatal its stroke,
And light was their march over mountain and rock.

Not the shepherd, though wary, and nimble of foot,
Might elude their keen glance, or escape their pursuit;
The husbandman mus'd in the vale by the brook,
But deep disappointment appear'd in his look ;
The field of his labours lay trampled and bare—
At morn had the ruthless marauders been there.
The fruits of the field and the flocks of the fold—
The wealth of the isle since the ages of old,
From the peer and the peasant were equally reft,
And the pittance, how poor, which the ravagers left !
Before them the beauty of paradise shone,
Behind, stretch'd a wilderness, gloomy and lone ;
Even spring's cheerful green disappear'd from the sod,
As if Attila's steed on each hillock had trode.

But the spirit of freedom afar took her flight,
And whisper'd to Plenty in dreams of the night,
That the glory of Albyn was seiz'd for a spoil,
That the foot of a foe had polluted her soil.
Ha, Freedom ! thy call is indeed talismanic,
It is heard, and the tyrant confesses his panic ;
It comes like a spell o'er the soul of the slave,
And he starts from his chains, like the dead from the
grave.

From repose in the greenwood the wanderer awoke,
The fetters of pleasure asunder he broke ;
And lightly his bark bounded over the main,
As homeward he hasten'd his right to regain.

All nature rejoic'd when the monarch return'd ;
(For nature his absence in sackcloth had mourn'd)
O'er her labours benevolence and beauty presided ;
Soft showers and bright sunshine the season divided ;
At morn the light breeze 'mong the branches would play,
On earth's bosom the dewdrops nocturnally lay :
The song of the bird was again in the bower,
And again the glad bee sipp'd the sweets of the flower ;
And the beetle, whose music the city ne'er heard,
Humm'd her evening hymn in the ear of the bard.

The Lord of the Isle stood alone on the strand,
To his standard he summon'd the choice of the land,
Youth's vigorous plants which the war-blast had spar'd,
When its fury the strength of the forest impair'd :
They march'd not in soldierly pomp to the field,
With war's vulgar weapons—with sword and with
shield ;
They appear'd in the garb which plain husbandmen
wear,—
They brandish'd the sickle, the scythe, and the share ;
Their arms were the same which in Rome's better days
Had won Cincinnatus his chaplet of praise ;
The same which Loncarty's stout champion bore,
When invasion's red torrent he stemm'd on the shore.
Nor sallied the Switzer from mountain and rock,
When Freedom and Tell from their slumber awoke,
With more ardour and zeal, than the Islesmen display'd,
In surrounding their chief, when his signal was made :

They were Albyn's defenders, the true and the tried,
For adversity sweeps the false-hearted aside.
When the spring-tide of fortune o'er nations is flowing,
When, bright as the noon-blaze, their glory is glowing,
Then is merit's chief meed to the patriot forbidden—
In the national splendour the hero is hidden ;
But when fortune abandons the helm of the state,
When friends are afar, and the foes at the gate ;
And hopes prove delusive, and perils are thickening,
And the heart of the boldest in secret is sickening ;
When ruin society's framework is tearing,—
O ! then is the moment for heroes appearing !
So Poland's fresh laurels excel, all allow,
The wreath, Sobieski ! that shaded thy brow ;
The bird on that banner her pinion hath stretch'd
To a sphere that the Eagle of Rome never reach'd.

Joy beat in each bosom, hope beam'd in each eye—
The morning of Albyn's deliverance was nigh ;
And the full swelling hearts of her sons found relief
In the song of affection which welcom'd their chief.

THE SONG OF WELCOME.

He is welcome to our homes,
He is welcome to our hearts,
He is welcome to our hills
And our valleys again !

Let the grateful muses bring
Tuneful tribute to our king,
And our farthest mountains ring
With the rapturous strain !

We had trouble, we had war,
When our leader wander'd far,
O'er the ocean's wavy bar,
To fair Italy's domain ;
But when darkest lower'd our night,
He return'd, like angel bright,
To install us in our right
And our freedom again.

There was sadness in the hall,
When our hopes were at the wall,
And when under cruel thrall
We were doom'd to complain ;
Now our fears are fled away
Like the cloud before the ray,
Since Plenty shall bear sway
In his kingdom again.

The weapons which we wield
Have been tried in many a field,
Though there's neither sword nor shield
To be found in our train :
Our fathers wore the same :
On their days of highest name,

And we'll emulate the fame
Of their war-deeds again.

Th' invader's hearts shall quail
When they gaze with visage pale,
On our banner in the gale,
And our bands on the plain :—
When we've recompens'd our woes
On our proud insulting foes,
Then shall Janus' temple close,
Ne'er to open again.

He is welcome to our homes,
He is welcome to our hearts,
He is welcome to our hills
And our valleys again !
Let the grateful muses bring,
Tuneful tribute to our king,
And let all our mountains ring
With the rapturous strain !

In numbers like these would the bards of the Isle
Give vent to the feelings they cherish'd the while :
And already the half of their labour was done,
Already, in part, was the victory won.
The showers which had long been in ether suspended,
Let loose from their springs, in profusion descended,
Filling Albyn with gladness, but fruitful of woe
To the fiery sons of the African bow :

The bow lost its vigour, its tension the string,
The arrow was faithless and flagg'd on the wing ;
And despair, which in sighs from his bosom would burst
Parlyz'd the resolves and the efforts of Thirst.
Disappointed of conquest, though glutted with crime,
His spirits subdued by the damps of the clime,
The merited vengeance of Plenty he dreaded,—
From the Maelstrom of ruin he quickly receded,
And sped o'er the main with his volatile crew,
In the land of his birth his misrule to renew.
Even there, if the muse o'er the future may glance,
Shall the conquering standard of Plenty advance ;
Ere long shall the lords of the arid Karroo
To the bountiful monarch submissively bow.

Meanwhile the banditti of Hunger, enrag'd
Because their confederates were thus disengag'd,
Defied every foe, and prepar'd to abide
The battle that soon should their fortune decide.
Round the Raven's dread sign, 'mid the noxious swamp,
In its vapours envelop'd they planted their camp ;
Nor ever assembled, for frolic or fray,
A group more terrific, more fiend-like than they :
Not the dwellers in Pluto's death-shaded domain,
Nor Gorgon depicted in classical strain,
Nor grey wizards who troop in the shades of the night,
Such sensations of horror unmix'd might excite.
From the engines of torture that cover'd their rear
Issued harsh, creaking sounds, most appalling to hear;

For the enemy still his invention would strain
To perfect each spring that might minister pain :
And to Thor he a whole human hecatomb vow'd—
Hosts of captives should bleed, were the Islesmen
subdued.

In the midst of his legions, all marshall'd for fight,
Walk'd their chief to and fro, like a spirit of night :
His big fleshless bones were in armour infolded
Which artificer skilful in magic had moulded,
(Who imparted to helmet and hauberk a charm
That should parry the blow of the powerfulest arm,)
His visage was wrapt in funereal gloom,
His voice was the hollow response of the tomb ;
From his eye no expression of dignity fell,
'Twas lifeless and rayless, and sunk in its cell ;
Only hate o'er his features would sullenly flash,
And his teeth like the phrenzied demoniac he'd gnash ;
And his gestures, which brook'd neither curb nor
control,
Bespoke the fierce passions that harass'd his soul :
For still in his mind the presentiment wrought
That the last of his fields was about to be fought.

Not so the high-spirited chief of the Isle—
His face was adorn'd with a confident smile,
While the language of hope to his bands he address'd,
As attentive around him they eagerly pressed ;
“ Your foe, my companions, is cruel and strong ;”
Thus spoke the avenger of insult and wrong,

“ The nations have tamely come under his yoke,
“ Their beauty and strength have been marr’d by his
stroke;
“ But you, happy Islanders ! sons of the sea !
“ You have always been great, independent, and free;
“ Yon host of intruders that darkens the dale,
“ Shall vanish before you, like dust in the gale,
“ In the strife’s awful vortex, where dangers abound,
“ Your leader and lord will be constantly found ;
“ I left you, ’tis true, but reproaches forbear,—
“ I am come every fault of the past to repair.”
He ended ; and loud as the thunder’s loud roar,
When it bursts o’er Duncarriden’s battlements hoar, (2)
Rung the joyous reply from the ranks all around,
Till the mountains sent back from their caverns the
Those echoes to Albyn were victory’s omen, [sound :
But they fell like a knell on the ear of the foemen.

When the ranks were replac’d, and the war-shout
was hush’d,
Then forward the phalanx of Islanders rush’d ;
While gaz’d every eye on the banner-borne Sheaf,
That wav’d o’er the head of the patriot chief.
No helm clasp’d the temples of Plenty, nor brand
He wielded—an ox-goad he held in his hand ;
Convinc’d that the sword forms of valour no part,
That victory is won by the arm,—by the heart.
Some moments of silence elaps’d ; then arose
Shouts discordant and wild from the camp of the foes :

Their king, of his power and his panoply vain,
Look'd on Albyn's array with the scowl of disdain ;
And many a dire malediction he pour'd.
On the sons of the Isle, and their generous lord :
For soon his opponent the tyrant desir'd,
And to combat him singly, he Plenty defied.
Not long unaccepted the challenge remain'd ;
The encounter he courted he promptly obtain'd.
Dividing the hosts was a moderate space,
In its centre the rivals in fame took their place ;
While motionless, round the arena, and mute,
Stood thousands to witness the deadly dispute.
What feelings the patriot's bosom beset,
Oh ! Albyn, what fears when the combatants met !
The cheek of thy bravest grew death-like and pale
When Hunger came forward ensconc'd in his mail ;
Frowning fierce as Apollyon unchain'd in his den,
Gaunt, ghastly and grim as the ghost of the glen.
He swore by his sword and the gods of the Goths
To scatter the Islesmen, or crush them like moths ;
And by all the bright orbs of his star-studded heavens
That the flesh of their chief should be food for the
ravens.

How bootless the speech he had boastingly spoken !
How feeble the spell that was soon to be broken !
On his forehead, no longer by sorcery defended,
A blow from the weapon of Plenty descended ;
The scourge of the nations fell—mortally wounded ;
And far o'er the war-field his armour resounded.

While the Islanders gaz'd on their foe's lifeless form,
As it lay like a tree overblown by the storm,
They exclaim'd, in the fervour of joy's ardent fever,
So let all tyrants perish, for ever and ever !

Not faster Philistia sought safety in flight
When the giant of Gath was struck down in the fight,
Than fled to their ships the rude hordes of the north
When their terrible champion lay prone on the earth ;
While their whole apparatus of torture was seiz'd,—
The sufferer was sooth'd and the captive releas'd ;
And many a vow the pale fugitives made,
That our island again they would never invade.

Long, long may the nymphs of remote Labrador
Wait for Hunger's approach to their ice-girdled shore !
And long may the Greenlander watch in his cave
For the tyrant's proud march on the bridge of the wave !
In the grave of his shame like an outcast he lies :—
The mighty hath fallen, no more to arise.

The noon of the Sabbath was sultry and still,
Slow heav'd the thick cloud o'er the crest of the hill,
When the flash on the lowering horizon afar
To the elements gave the red signal of war.
The call is obey'd, all the thunders awaken
The hills to their rocky foundations are shaken ;
Heaven's windows are open'd, and torrents of rain
Rush down on the mountains, and deluge the plain ;

The stream of the vale, with new vigour supplied,
Sweeps o'er the broad harvests that wav'd in their pride.
And the sea-bird's wild scream with the tempest is
blending,

As if ocean his reign o'er the earth were extending ;
The worshippers tremble amid the commotion,
While they haste to their homes from the house of
devotion ;

The truths which the teacher had mildly reveal'd,
By the storm with the impress of terror are seal'd.
But the spirit who woke the tornado went forth
On his loud-sounding car o'er the skies of the north ;
The sunbeams again in our valley repos'd ;
The Sabbath in holy tranquillity clos'd ;
And only the tale of the tempest was told
By the hollow-ton'd river as onward it roll'd.
So mighty a change hath our land undergone,
Since Plenty was seated again on his throne ;
Our fears pass'd away like the thin summer cloud,
And long were our grateful rejoicings, and loud ;
By the aged the anthem of gladness was sung,
Responsive it flow'd from the lips of the young ;
Nor yet shall it cease ;—the remotest posterity
Shall look back to the era of peace and prosperity ;
Full oft by his hearth shall the cottager tell
Of the fortunes that whilom his fathers befell ;
He shall tell to his sons, he shall tell with a tear,
The deeds that distinguish'd the wonderful year ;

While his thanks shall ascend to the Ruler of all,
Who sent a deliverer to save us from thrall ;
The hungry who fed with the choice of the wheat,
And render'd the triumph of Plenty complete.

BURN AND BYKEN.

A BALLAD.

THE tragical story of Burn and Byken, though it is without a date, and rests solely on tradition, is considered authentic. The land from which the heroes of the tale, after the Scottish fashion, derived their respective designations, are in the parish of Westerkirk, on the banks of the Esk, and about four or five miles from Langholm. Burns' family was a branch of the clan Beattison, or Beattie, which anciently possessed the upper part of the district of Eskdale. A great number of his descendants are still residing in the same district. With respect to Byken's name, nothing farther can be ascertained, than that he bore the formidable soubriquet of *Andrew Braidsword*.

A large stone, at a pass in the range of hills which separates Eskdale from Wauchopedale, and just at the point where the farm of Craig and those of Caulfield and Cleughfoots meet, is supposed to mark the spot where the rivals fought and fell. The duel was followed by a law-suit between the families, which terminated in the ruin of both parties, and the alienation of their estates.

IN lonely mansion, old and grey,
Far in the leafy wood,
Dwelt Burn, a long-descended chief,
With mind of haughty mood.

High on the hill frown'd Byken's tower,
Braving the wintry gale;
Its lord look'd down with kingly pride
Upon his subject vale.

His hardy kinsmen, train'd and true,
Were under his control;
But dark revenge dwelt in his breast,
And sullen was his soul.

Oft to the revel and the feast
With Burn he had repair'd,
And oft the foray's dangerous toils
Together they had shar'd.

They stood in the day of civil broil,
On the war-field side by side,
When the Douglas' blood drench'd Arkinholm,
And the foam of the river dyed.(1)

And when fierce Musgrave's plundering bands
On Scotland urg'd their war,
To the tide of ruin as it roll'd
Their swords had prov'd a bar.

But woe to the wine-cup—bitter fount
Whence tears and sorrows flow!
Pleasure may brighten round the brim,
But poison lurks below.

In friendship's guise the chieftains met,
The noxious cup went round ;
Late was the hour—they boasted loud
Of courser and of hound.

Then follow'd fiercer words, and tones
Of stern defiance rung ;
And oft they grasp'd the weapon's hilt
That in its scabbard hung.

They part in peace—to meet in war ;
Each shook his rival's hand,
That hand which by the break of morn
Should strain the deadly brand.

Burn hasten'd to his woodland home,
His mind inflam'd with wine ;
He call'd his lady fair, a dame
Of Maxwell's haughty line :

“ My word,” quoth Burn, “ is deeply pledg'd
Whatever may betide,
To meet with Byken in red war,
At morn on yon mountain's side.”

The morning came—its cheering rays
Through parting cloudlets stream'd ;
Labour was up—the mower's scythe
Down in the meadow gleam'd.

Rose Burn, forgetful of the past ;
 Woo'd by the season's smile,
 He, musing, wander'd where the hind
 Pursued his peaceful toil.

Not so the lady of his love—
 Alive to honour's call,
 Sooner than share her lord's disgrace
 She'd spread his funeral pall.

“ Where is thy valour fled ? ” she cried,
 “ Where is thy plighted word ?
 And wilt thou shrink from Byken's arm ?
 And dost thou fear his sword ? ”

Ill might proud Burn abide reproach,
 Ill brook'd he taunt or jeer ;
 His joys had been in battle-field,
 His breast ne'er shelter'd fear.

Memory awoke—he turn'd his back
 On swain and scented swathe,
 To bear a part in other toils,
 On the harvest-field of death.

The fearless dame of Maxwell's race
 Brac'd on his brand :—“ Let Burn
 Come back,” she cried, “ with victory,
 Or on his bier return.”

Then rush'd he away to the field of fight,
Like one impell'd by fate:
Th' appointed hour was already past,
And why should Byken wait?

The sun rose high, and bright was the sky,
The bird was mute in the bower,
While Maxwell's daughter pensive sat
At noon in her wood-girt tower.

“ Away,” she cried, “ ye swift of foot !
Away, ye strong of arm !
Go, seek your lord on yon mountain path !
I fear he suffers harm.”

And away they sped, a numerous train,
All bearing brand or bill,
To seek the master whom they lov'd,
On the foot-paths of the hill.

Borne on the mountain-breeze they heard
The raven's boding cry :—
For awful doings had been done,
Far from obtruding eye.

There Burn and Byken, each the chief,
The bravest of his race,
Calm as the sleeping infant, lay
In death's clay-cold embrace.

The strife was o'er, and none might tell
The combat's thrilling tale ;
But darkly was its story writ
On each warrior's forehead pale.

The death-chill'd hand still grasp'd the brand,
And red was the trampled sod,
And still from many a gaping wound
The purple life-drops flow'd.

Well might the dame of the wood-girt tower
Accuse herself of crime ;
And long lament for her gallant lord,
Who fell in manhood's prime.

VERSES

ADDRESSED TO ONE OF THE HUMAN TEETH DUG OUT
OF THE CAIRN ON AIRSWOOD-MOSS, MAY 1828.

TOOTH of the olden time ! I'd wish to learn
 Thy living history ; what age and nation
 Thou represented'st underneath the cairn,
 Fruitful of antiquarian speculation ;
 Nor are my queries an unmeaning sally—
 Tooth is to tongue a neighbour and an ally.

Was it thy proud distinction, ancient tooth,
 To ornament and arm a Roman jaw,
 When the all-conquering legions of the south
 Impos'd on us their language and their law ?
 When death or bondage seem'd to overtake us,
 Pray, didst thou gnash defiance on Galgacus ?

Was thy proprietor a sky-blue Pict,
 Remarkable for longitude of arm ?
 One of that tribe which kingly Kenneth kick'd
 From crown and kingdom, to their no small harm ?

Well known they were, I wot, for uncouth grammar,
For painting, too, and throwing the sledge-hammer.

Perhaps thou art a tooth of Saxon breed,
(A heath'nish cruel race with yellow hair,)
And haply grinn'd within some helmed head,
With very transport, when the victim fair
Was seiz'd and slain, and sacrificed, and sodden,
And served up to bloody Thor and Woden.

Thou'rt not Druidical, I'm prone to think,
For near thy lonely tomb no forests grow ;
Nor, o'er thy bending river's grassy brink,
Hath the green oak its shade been known to throw,
Forming a fane of gloom for Druid sages,
Or all hath perish'd in the lapse of ages.

What was thy owner, then ? a warrior dire,
Who liv'd and died amid the din of battle ?
Was he some consequential feudal squire,
Who bought and sold his serfs like other cattle ?
Mayhap a bard, with soul of gentler quality,
Who sigh'd for, but obtain'd not, immortality.

If so, what funeral rites appeas'd his shade ?
Wak'd minstrelsy her wildest intonations ?
Did silent sorrow many a breast pervade ?
Or rung the welkin wide with ululations,

While rose in air the monumental stones,
A graceful cone—most venerable—of bones ?

Ah ! little thought the magnet of his times—
Th' aspiring bard—the man of power—the hero—
That his renown should rise in these my rhymes
After ten centuries' repose at zero ;
And that his tooth, ejected from its socket,
Should toss and tumble in my waistcoat pocket.

Having discuss'd these high concerns a little,
(I hope with some decorum and propriety)
There yet remain some minor points to settle,
Though not less interesting to society ;
Questions connected with domestic quiet
And happiness—I now allude to diet.

Much as I've sought thy lineage and descent,
Thou bony remnant of departed glory !
I own I'm not less anxiously bent
To learn thy private, more immediate story—
What meats, or common or by way of cordial,
Have undergone thy masticating ordeal.

'Twere an uncourteous question, “ Didst thou fare
On luxuries which modern teeth disable ? ”
Thy hardy frame and healthful looks declare
That no such trash e'er trifled on thy table :

Thine was the food of undegenerate ages,
Else never hadst thou figured in my pages.

'Twas thine, heroic tooth ! 'twas thine to pierce
The red deer's swelling sides with pride dilated ;
The wild boar's head, terrific, grim, and fierce,
Thy eager, ardent onset too awaited ;
Then teeth with tusk in deadly conflict meeting,
Display'd the feats of true primeval eating.

'Twere equally uncivil to inquire
If aught thou knowest of the frightful *ache* ;
Thy fangs are sound as one could well desire,
Thy hard enamel smooth as frozen lake.
Thy triumph is twofold, O tooth sublime !
Thou scorn'st alike tooth-ache and tooth of time.

And here thou art, a prodigy—a wonder—
A monument of undecaying earth ;
Nor more of thee we'll know till the last thunder
Shall from his slumbers call thy master forth ;
These puzzles which I grapple with in vain
Shall then be solv'd—and all thy case seem plain.

WINKYN WORDE'S SKULLE,

A BOGLE STORIE.

“ RISE up, rise up, Marjorie my maide,
 An’ busk yeresel’ wi’ speed ;
 A yerrand ye maun rin for me
 To the dwalling place o’ the deid.

“ Ye hae heard o’ Winkyn Worde o’ the glen,
 The maister o’ monie a charm ;—
 Gin I had the wizard’s withert skulle,
 ’Twad keep my house frae harm.

“ It lies aneath the grey thruch-stane,
 Aside the auld kirk wa’,
 Where the dew never dries off the nettle leaf,
 An’ the rain-drops heavilie fa’.

“ The daurin’ deed, if I rightlie read,
 Maun be dune at the midnight hour ;
 An’ by maiden her lane maun the taeken be taen,
 Else it can ha’e nae power.

“ Haste, haste ye away, my maide Marjorie,
 An’ tell nane where ye’re gaun ;
 Haste, haste ye away to the thruch-stane grey,
 An’ bring Winkyn’s pow i’ yere haun’.”

“ O ! dear laddie, the nicht is mirk,
 The muin she’s i’ the wane ;
 I daurna gang to the kirk-yard drear—
 I daurna gang my lane.

“ The win’ sighs i’ the hie kirk-tower,
 It tinkles the steeple bell :—
 O ! the kirk-yard is a dowie place—
 I daurna gang mysel’.

“ Loud yowl’d the grew at the yett yestreen,
 The cock crew a’ nicht lang,
 An’ the deid-licht pale twinklit doon o’ the dale—
 O ! na, I daurna gang.”

“ Ye sall get a siller kaim, Marjorie,
 An’ a braw new silken goon ;
 Ye may catch the e’e o’ Patrick the laird
 When ye gang to the market toon.

“ Gin ye hate i’ yere heart the thing that’s wrang,
 An’ wish yere neebor weel,
 Yere as safe i’ the nicht as i’ the braid daylicht
 Frae the grips o’ ghaist or deil.”

“ O ! laddie dear, yere words are gude ;
 I’ve heard it said an’ sung,
 That ’gainst the maide o’ the halie mind
 Nae dog wad muive its tongue.

“ The sinfu’ wight at the deid houre o’ nicht
 Unsonsie sichts may see ;
 But I never did harm to Winkyn Worde—
 He winna fash wi me.

“ Nae ill gets harbour i’ my heart,
 I hate the thocht that’s wrang ;
 An’ what need I fear i’ the kirk-yard drear ?—
 I’ the strength o’ gude I’ll gang.”

The blast blew snell, an the sleetie shower fell,
 The storm rav’d loud o’er the lea ;
 Ilk little burn roun’ scaur and crag
 Ran rowin like a sea.

’Twas the mirkest houre o’ a’ the twal,
 No a stern i’ the lift could ane ken ;
 Noucht yirthlie nicht be asteer that nicht
 But Marjorie o’ the glen.

Fast ran she doon by the big water-side,
 That shuke a’ its banks an’ its braes
 Wi’ fearfu’ din as its waves of faem
 Strave hard wi’ their rocky faes.

Fast skreev'd she by the bogle brig,
 An' roun' by the warlock knowe,
 An' doon the kirk loanin sae dowie and dark,
 Where the stalwart ash-trees growe.

The fitfu' blast frae the wil' nor-wast
 Wail'd out its eerie moan ;
 An' she'd start an' stare at the fire-flaucht's glare
 As she enter'd the kirk-yard lone.

She paus'd awee at the black kirk-yett,
 To reive the pow she was laith,
 Lest Winkyn Worde or the Worrikow
 Should cause her deidlie skaith ;
 But the cheerin' thoughts o' Patrick the laird
 Upheld her sinkin' faith.

She brenyelt outowre the braid flat stanes
 Where the deid lay i' monie a raw ;
 Nor miss'd she the way to the thruch-stane grey,
 Aside the auld kirk wa.'

For weel she kent the unloesome spat
 Where the wizard's banes were laid,
 Aside the lang black coffin spaiks,
 An' the sexton's shool an' his spaid.

As she lootit doon by the grey thruch-stane,
 An' glaumt wi' her haun' underneath,

The win' fell lown, 'twas an eerie calm,
 Ilk breeze held in his breath ;
 An' the warslin' taps o' the tall ash-trees
 Grew a' as still as death.

She raucht her out the fleshless skulle
 Wi' tremblin' haun', I ween ;
 Her fingers held by the deep een-holes
 Where the licht o' life had been.

She turn'd her roun' for the black kirk-yett,
 But away she could na win,
 For afore her stude auld Winkyn Worde,
 Risen straucht up through the grun'.

He star'd in her face wi' his een o' glass,
 An' he heav'd his bainie haun ;—
 Puir Marjorie's heart grew cauld as lead,
 An' she shuke like a willie wan'.

“ That skulle is mine,” the phantom graen'd,
 Wi' a voice unyirthlie howe ;
 An' sune frae Marjorie's powerless grip
 Doon fell the unblest pow.

As it rowit on the swaird, loud leuch the ghaist
 Till the auld aisle rang again ;—
 She heard nae mair, she fell in a swarf
 Aside the grey thruch-stane ;

Nor liftit her een till the blest daylicht
 Shane blithe owre hill and plain.

Now Mess John he was a worthie man,
 And a man o' muckle thought ;
 An' he lang'd for a waff o' the mornin' air,
 As bukemen ever oucht.

He walkit,—'twas his wont,—mang the wreck o' his
 kin',
 The saut tear fell frae his ee ;
 Man's weird he mourn'd, for his thoughts were turn'd
 To frail mortalitie.

He chancit on the spat whaur Marjorie lay,
 An' he grippit her haun' sae cauld,—
 She tauld her tale, an' the gude man gruwit
 At the awsome tale she tauld.

He led her away to his ha' sae bein,
 An' he set her doon wi' care ;
 An' a' his concern was a stork'nin' draught
 For Marjorie to prepare.

For Mess John he was a skilfu' man,
 Chirurgeon gude was he,
 He weel could descrive ilk cramp and craze
 That sets auld banes ajee.

For Marjorie's case a cure he got,
An' he mixed it up fu' sune;—
She wat her lips, but nane could she drink,—
Puir Marjorie's days were dune.

Let maiden ne'er do unlawfu' deid,
Or for reward or fee,
Nor darklins meet wi' ghaist or sprite,
Lest Marjorie's fate she dree.

THE LEGEND OF THE SWEARER'S SKIN.

In the parish of Kilpatrick once
There dwelt a wicked wight,
Who with his horrid swearing did
The country folk affright.

And this was still his favourite oath,
His most familiar sin,
"If the story which I tell be false,
The devil take my skin!"

Long time he liv'd, long time he swore,
Still waxing worse and worse,
Though many a warning he had got
To quit such sinful course.

At last he died,—as better men
Had often died before,—
And six feet deep his grave was dug,
In front of the church-door.

It was a fearful day, 'tis said,
On which the funeral pass'd ;
Some people most devoutly deem'd
That it would prove the last.

Trees were uprooted by the wind,
The rain in torrents pour'd,
Fleet flew the lightning's deadly dart,
Th' appalling thunder roar'd.

Nor ceas'd the elemental din,
Nor was the tempest stay'd,
Till in the craving womb of earth
The swearer's corpse was laid.

The neighbours thought him well away,
And hop'd he'd ne'er come back ;
His wife rejoic'd, for many a time
He beat her blue and black.

And all the little boys and girls
Sung out in merry mood,
" The naughty man who frighten'd us
Now lies below the sod."

Now the parson of Kilpatrick was
A man of study deep ;
He spent those hours in watchfulness
That fools devote to sleep.

'Mong nature's awful mysteries,
His thoughts were wont to roam ;
Much of the present world he knew,
And much of that to come.

He look'd into the future with
A prophet's piercing eye ;
He read the fate of kingdoms in
The volume of the sky ;

He would trace the wiles of witchery to
Their darkest lurking place ;
And detect the secret mark of hell
Stamp'd on the wizard's face.

He'd talk'd with spirits good and bad,
The wandering ghost he'd laid ;
Nor of the father-fiend himself
Was he a whit afraid ;

Though oftentimes that spiteful sprite
Would take some startling form,—
A grunting hog,—a braying ass,—
His Reverence to alarm,

'Twas all in vain ; he stood unmov'd,
Like Atlas on its base ;
And hurl'd upon the tempter's head
Derision and disgrace.

The enemy of all that's good
Fought shy, and kept aloof,
Whilst the indignant parson dealt
Well-merited reproof.

Kilpatrick's parson pensive stood
By the swearer's grave alone ;
(And a grave new clos'd is a dreary thing,
When the funeral train is gone.)

On the oaths that man of sin had sworn
He dwelt in thought profound ;
For well he knew such impious words
Ne'er fall void to the ground.

He marvell'd that he'd been allow'd
So long to live and thrive,
And that he died like other men,
And was not flayed alive.

Still he opin'd, the powers below
Would make their bargain good,
Else the motions of his inner man
He'd quite misunderstood.

But that the old serpent from his prey
For once might be debarr'd,
He purpos'd by the swearer's grave
To keep strict watch and ward.

He'd tried the strength of man's sworn foe,
He knew his power to harm ;
But he wore a sword of virtue rare
That could his rage disarm.

'Twas not a falchion flashing clear,
Far o'er the battle field,
(Weapon unmeet *that* were I ween
For priestly hand to wield.)

No ponderous, formidable brand
For parry or for thrust ;
'Twas pointless as the peaceful share,
And redd'n'd o'er with rust :

The hostile arm in carnal strife
Might brave its fellest stroke,
But woe to th' unembodied foe
Who should its rage provoke !

Grav'd on its blade were words of power
Cull'd from the Holy Book ;—
The awful names of the Supreme
On which no fiend might look.

Thus arm'd, the parson walk'd into
The church at eventide,
The hottest brunt of Satan's war
Determin'd to abide.

Into the pulpit straight he stept,
And trimm'd the evening lamp,
To prevent surprise, so ran the phrase,
By spies from the enemy's camp.

Then solemnly he took the sword,
And round his station drew
A circle most mysterious which
No spirit might get through:

'Twould stop the course of fiercest fiends,
Though it seem'd a simple thing ;
They'd sooner scale the starry arch
Than pass that mystic ring.

Nor might their eyes, though blaz'd the lamp,
On ought but darkness look,
Or gaze on the lone sentinel
In his spell-protected nook.

The parson thus prepar'd against
Whatever might befall,
Glanc'd through the window on the grave—
Then sat him down withal.

The hours mov'd on ; no sound was heard,
No living shape was seen
Within the temple's hallow'd walls ;—
Without, all was serene :

The stars gave forth their mellow light,
The winds slept in their caves,
And the balmy night-dews softly fell
Upon the field of graves.

Pensive and pale, when morn awoke
The parson walk'd abroad,
For still his mind was unreliev'd
Of its prophetic load :

He spent the day in solitude
And cogitation deep ;
No food refresh'd his weary frame,
He kept his eyes from sleep ;

And when the tardy sun had sunk
Behind the mountains blue,
He hasten'd to the church again,
His vigils to renew.

Again he lighted up the lamp,
The lonesome hours to cheer ;
Again he trac'd the circular mark
That sinful spirits fear.

Silence prevail'd, and nature felt
The pleasures of repose,
Till midnight, when, as from a trance,
The frantic blast arose ;

Quak'd to its core the church, as if
The many winds of heaven
On its devoted roof had met,
And for the mastery striven.

Yet cool the parson sat the while,
With watchful ear and eye ;
For the hideous howl of the tempest told
That the prince of the air was nigh.

But the blast had pass'd on its wild career
Not to return again,
And he heard a dreamy, dying hum
As it swept up the woodland glen.

Nor stirr'd there breath of air again
Till morning cheer'd the earth,
When the unwearied watchman from
His watch-tower sallied forth.

Another tedious day he spent
In rigid self-denial,
To fit his frame for what he deem'd
The final fiery trial :

Another day of thought intense,
Another night of travail
Would bring his labours to a close,
And Satan's plot unravel :

And he who would with devils war
Must wisdom's lesson cone,
Else the might of hell were an over-match
For the arm of flesh and bone.

Twilight return'd, and the dauntless man
Again to his post repair'd ;
He form'd anew the rampart-ring,
No prudent pains he spar'd :

And guarded well by holy spell,
Arm'd with the sword of power,
He felt as calm, as confident
As lady in her bower.

Twas midnight, and the demon-winds
Awoke in seven-fold wrath,
So that their former fury seem'd
Only the zephyr's breath.

The church-yard trees of strongest growth
Like rotten reeds were shiver'd ;
The very earth, though ribb'd with rock,
Like leaf of aspen quiver'd :

And but for spell-craft's potent aid
That warded off the harm,
The church itself had disappear'd
Like stubble in the storm.

Increas'd the hurricane, till, crash !
 The church-door open burst,
 And in there rush'd (O horrible !)
 A band of fiends accurst ;

Each horn'd and hoof'd like Highland ox,
 After his hairy kind,
 With bloody tusks and claws to boot,
 And dragon tail behind.

In their fell grasp they held—a sight
 The stoutest to astound—
 The swearer's loathsome limbs—his face
 Was dragg'd along the ground.

Contemptuously the lifeless man
 They on the pavement threw,
 And to their task of butchery
 Applied the hellish crew :

With gnashing teeth and talons fierce
 Upon their prey they leap'd,
 And quickly from his carcass vile
 The swearer's pelt was stripp'd.

Then many a wild, unearthly scream,
 And many a ghastly grin
 Express'd such joy as devils feel
 While doing deeds of sin.

The viewless parson from his seat
Beheld their hellish sport,
And soon he check'd their mirth—he cut
Their fancied triumph short :

He brandish'd high the sword of power,
And he nam'd the Mighty name,
And away the foul infernals flew
In a flash of sulph'rous flame :

Away to their dreary, doleful den
They sped with wailing cries ;
But they left the skin, in their mortal fright—
The parson's well-won prize.

SEQUEL TO THE SWEARER'S SKIN.

When the fiends had fled and the storm was stay'd,
And morning shew'd her face,
The priest with the prize which his prowess had won
Walk'd forth with a comely grace.

Kilpatrick's anxious matrons throng'd
Around him and inquir'd
Much of the warfare he had wag'd ;
They trembled and admir'd :

But he himself could only sum
His glory's full amount,
Or turn the trophy he had won
To profitable account.

Inside the church he stuck a peg
Into the mouldy wall,
And he hung the swearer's skin thereon,
In view of one and all.

(So when the battle-day is past,
And victory's anthem sung,
The captur'd banner, grim with gore,
High in the wall is hung.)

For Kilpatrick's dalesmen, sooth to say,
In sottishness were sunk ;
They quarrell'd daily with their wives,
They gambled, they got drunk.

But gazing on the skin, they felt
A salutary alarm ;
The prelude, so their teacher hop'd,
To radical reform.

Weekly the good man strove to make
His people think and feel,
And the dread memento from the wall
Supported each appeal.

When reason might not reach their hearts,
In cold indifference mail'd ;
When figure, trope, and syllogism,
Each in its turn had fail'd ;

The parson then by downright force
The victory would win ;
He rais'd his voice to passion's tone,
And pointed to the skin ;

“ Ye stupid, stiff-neck'd, stubborn ones !”
Thus would he sharply chide,
“ Perverse, instruction-hating race,
Behold that human hide !”

These accents on the hearers' hearts
Fell like a thunder-stroke ;
Each hanging ear prick'd up amain,
Each drowsy eye awoke ;

And when attention flagg'd again,
And eyes began to close,
There needed but t' administer
The spirit-stirring dose.

Instructed thus, Kilpatrick soon
All other parts excell'd ;
Wisdom and worth were duly priz'd,
Folly and fools expell'd.

But the parson from this weary world
(Too soon, alas !) departed,
Leaving Kilpatrick's lovely vale
Forlorn and broken-hearted.

Upon the grey stone o'er his grave,
Smooth-flowing numbers tell
How his arm of might had put to flight
The banner'd bands of hell.

And pious hands have carv'd the sword,
Whose fame shall know no tarnish,
The sword with which the parson cut
The joints of Satan's harness.

A new-light guide came next, and all
Into disorder threw :—
Hastening, as one may well suppose,
The premises to view.

“ What monstrous-looking thing is that ? ”
He cried, his eyes beholding
The shrivell'd skin : the answer set
The choleric man a-scolding.

“ Go; take that mark of folly down,”
Such was his dire command,
“ Go, tear it down, and see it burnt,
Yes, by the sexton's hand.”

Rash, reckless man ! thy conduct told
On modesty and morals ;
Again men swore, and drank, and with
Their wives renew'd old quarrels.

Yet still Kilpatrick's patriarchs
Tell of the good old time,
When their parson in so strange a way
Curb'd the career of crime.

And still they charge the new-light priest
With sacrilege and sin ;
He did the devil service when
He burnt the swearer's skin.

ODE TO “ THE MUCKLE POT O’
SKELFHILL.”

“ The Muckle Pot o’ Skelfhill,” of considerable notoriety in the traditional history of the Border, was an immense cauldron, long preserved at the farm-house of Skelfhill, in the district of Teviotdale. Besides the domestic uses to which it was more obviously and naturally adapted, it was occasionally made subservient to purposes of a quite different nature; some of which are alluded to in the following stanzas. But the boiling alive of the tyrannical Lord Soulis is the most remarkable circumstance connected with its history. The Nine-stane Rig, where that dreadful act of retribution was perpetrated, “ is a declivity, about one mile in breadth, and four in length, descending upon the water of Hermitage, from the range of hills which separates Liddesdale and Teviotdale. It derives its name from one of those circles of large stones, which are termed Druidical, nine of which remained to a late period. Five of these stones are still visible; and two are particularly pointed out, as those which supported the iron bar upon which the fatal cauldron was suspended.” *See Leyden’s Ballad of Lord Soulis, in the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border.*

Hail ! king of cauldrons, large and small tea-kettles,
Of culinary things of every name,
Whether of copper, or of coarser metals ;—
Fain would my humble muse diffuse thy fame :

Parent of brose—the paragon of victuals !

Let Albyn loudly laud thee, and proclaim
Thy worth, thou fountain of all Scottish greatness,
From southern Solway to the coast of Caithness !

I call'd thee “ king,” immortal pot ! nay, more ;

Thou wast a Patriot, staunch in freedom's cause :
When o'er the Border Soulis dominion bore,

And crush'd the dalesmen with his lordly paws,—
When vengeance rose, and down the tyrant tore,
‘Twas thine to ope thy justice-dealing jaws,
And, swinging from two jaggy, jutting crags,
To boil the wizard's sinful flesh to rags.

But though the honours of the state were shar'd

By thee when in thy native, youthful vigour ;
And though the law, which traitors had impair'd,

Recover'd 'neath thy rule its righteous rigour,
Yet couldst thou bend on trifles thy regard,

And cut a very tolerable figure,
Apart from politics and civil strife,
Amid the usages of common life.

Well didst thou play thy part, I've heard it told,

When the huge *haggis*, emblem of fecundity,
Across thy ocean's billowy bosom roll'd,

Or, plung'd adown the fathomless profundity,
From thence again, resplendent to behold !

Upheaving high its mountain-like rotundity ;

As great leviathan upon the deep
In sportive mood will sometimes bounce and leap.

Careering on thy Phlegethontine wave,
When merry swains held rural festival,
Full oft was seen, like brigantine so brave,
The swarthy ram's head, twisted horns and all,
Whilst ever and anon the spume would lave
Thy burning brim, and bubbling o'er, would fall
In unctuous splashes on the potent fire,
Eliciting fierce hiss and sputter dire.

So deep in Etna's cavern'd womb, the forge
At which grim Vulcan's sweaty workmen toil,
Chafes, foams, and eddies, the sulphureous surge,
And all is hideous uproar and turmoil ;
Till from the tortur'd mountain's gaping gorge
Forth bursts the lava-tide, covering the soil
For many a league with barrenness and ashes,
Maugre processions, sainted bones and masses.

Far different duty too, in by-gone days,
'Twas thine at times, great cauldron ! to perform
If we may trust what grave tradition says,
The weary chapman batter'd by the storm
Within thy concave found a resting place,
Much to his comfort, roomy, snug, and warm :
The blast might through the barn-yard wicket boom,
It harm'd not him who slumber'd in thy womb.

Though now remov'd from place of power and trust,

Thou standest in thy might without a flaw;

In vain shall wasting time, or envious rust

Attempt thy undecaying strength to gnaw;

Still thou appear'st majestic and august,

Filling beholders with a sort of awe,

After thy kind, a chieftain high and haughty,

Enjoying otium cum dignitate.

While toiling ants the slothful hand upbraid,

While reigns the elephant among mammalia,

While pensive poets court the twilight's shade,

While history notes her Cannæ and Pharsalia,

While British sails on every breeze are spread,

While loyal Scotland boasts her old regalia,

While broth and brose shall glide down Scottish
throats,

Thy name shall live, Napoleon of the Pots !

FAREWELL TO SNUFF,

ON ITS BEING CRIED DOWN AS A LUXURY BY THE
TEMPERANCE SOCIETY PEOPLE, 1830.

There is a sadness in the sound, "farewell"
Which shrouds in midnight-pall joy's transient
day ;
It falls upon the spirit like a spell,
Or like a knell when clay returns to clay :
No other term in our vernacular tongue
Half so much sorrow from the heart hath wrung.

Farewell to fame, to freedom and to friends,
To lovers too—these griefs may all be borne ;
Yet is there still *one* woe which these transcends,
Felt to the full when *thou* art from us torn,
Fancy's companion in her secret seat !—
Thy vulgar name it irks me to repeat.

Thy inspirations oft my toils have cheer'd,
And oft the gloom of solitude dispell'd ;
Aided by thee I've edifices rear'd,
By fairy monarch's palace ne'er excell'd,
Mansions of splendour, gilt with beauty's blaze,
Bas'd on the clouds and roof'd with sunny rays.

Oft when the muses had my suit denied,
And left me in despondency to pine,
Thou readily their places hast supplied,
And loosen'd from its source the liquid line,
Till couplet following couplet far and fast,
Roll'd on their tuneful way—a river vast.

Herald thou art of high imaginings !
Thou journeyest where the germs of wit are stor'd,
Where science bursts from her mysterious springs,
Like those of Nile full hard to be explor'd :—
Bruce of the brain ! there needeth not apology
For dubbing thee Professor of phrenology.

Much could I speak of snuff-boxes and snuff ;
Much might be sung of kings who priz'd a pinch—
Napoleon, of whom we've heard enough,
And Prussian Frederick, heroes every inch :
What was it, wise ones ! kept their swords from rust ?
Why, nothing but the “ titilating dust.”

Napoleon ! when o'er Leipsic's field of fight
The thunder-peals of war began to roll,
Thy box was empty, else the eagle's flight
Had still been onward to fame's farthest goal ;
But oh ! thou sought'st for snuff where it was not,
And—Cæsar and his fortunes went to pot.

Snuff-box ! thy power extended wide and far ;

 All sorts of people, in each varied station,
 Accounted thee a pocket polar star

 To light their course on every dark occasion,
When losses, cares, and crosses, in their strife,
 Curdled the billows of the sea of life.

More than the gaudy, glittering, gorgeous gem

 From far Golconda's rocky entrails torn,
 And stuck in state on kingly diadem,—

 I priz'd my *mill*, though formed of humble horn.
Ha ! while I felt it snug below my arm,
 Mine eye would brighten and my spirits warm.

Sweet snuff ! dear snuff ! when now my feeble Muse,
 Spent with her flight, began to droop the wing,
 'Twas thine new life and vigour to infuse ⁽¹⁾

 Into my frame, enabling her to sing
Longer and stronger. Verily, with thee
 Apollo holds companionship, rapee !

Such honours are thy due,—they were thine own
 In days departed—in a happier age ;
But now perverted taste hath chang'd its tone,
 And prejudice expends on thee its rage :
Thine ancient dignity avails thee not,
 Thy faults are told, thy virtues are forgot.

Philosophers thy merits have confess'd,
Then why these fierce invectives of the dull ?
Surely my ban poetical shall rest
For ever on his sacerdotal skull (2)
Who thee denounc'd in furious phrase, and frantic,
While genuine crime stalk'd through the land gigantic

So have I seen, when summer days were dry,
A youngster with a dwarfish angling rod,
Deal dire destruction 'mong the minnowy fry,
Reckless of larger fish that swarm abroad ;
And then march home in haste, delighted boy !
With look as big as if he'd taken Troy.

What then ? since Temperance will have it so,
To nasal happiness I bid farewell—
To joys which but th' initiated know,
Those who appreciate the sense of smell.
Ah ! while I let the woeful accents slip,
Heartfelt emotion quivers on my lip.

No more, kind prompter, shall thy summons gay
Call forth my fancy with the rising dawn ;
No more its soothing qualities allay
My soul's turmoil when daylight is withdrawn :
No more I'll listen to thy tidings brought,
Swift courier ! from the murky realms of thought.

Farewell to those ideal coruscations
Emitted from thy casket,—sparkling token—
Farewell to friendship's most sublime sensations !
Alas ! her softest, simplest tie is broken :
Fate hath decreed that firmest friends must sever ;—
Friend of my throbbing heart, farewell for ever.

ODE TO THE CONDOR.

Unrivall'd monarch of the ravenous tribe
 That holds the hollow crag and desert glen !
 Stupendous Condor ! how shall I describe
 Thy character with this my puny pen ?
 He who aright would thy achievements sing
 Must pluck a feather from thy waving wing.

How shall I celebrate thy regal look,
 Thy talons deadly as the warrior's lance,
 Thy battle-bill bent like the reaper's hook,
 Thy pinions forming forty feet expanse ;
 Thy awful doings on the field of slaughter,
 Where bestial blood thou pourest forth like water ?

It is thy choicest pastime from heaven's height
 To scan the grazing herd far, far below,
 Then pounce amain in thy collected might
 Upon the unsuspecting buffalo,
 And bear him bellowing to thine airy den,
 Lightly as would the mountain-kite a wren.

Full soon thou canst his carcass huge divide,
Break his big bones, and dislocate each limb,
Nor stop to strain thy throat at his tough hide,
His horny hoof, or frontlet rough and grim ;
Nor shalt thou, with unnecessary care,
Reserve a slice to help the morrow's farc.

Though thou shouldst happen at a moderate hour,
On bullock beef, or buffalo, to dine,—
Such is thy gastric juice's active power,
Thou couldst discuss a goodly buck at nine ;
Nor will, when mountain mutton thou wouldest munch,
A brace of lamas serve thee for a lunch.

Of feather'd creatures paragon thou art,
Whether we view thee on the breezes sailing,
Or roosting on the pointed rock apart,
Or martial law among thy lieges dealing :
Compar'd with thee, each Transatlantic wonder
Dwindles into a trifle, matchless Condor !

When forth from Chimborazo's loftiest cliff
Thou boundest, cloud-like to the hunter's sight,
Graceful as o'er the blue lake skims the skiff,
Thou voyagest on waveless seas of light,
Still soaring sun-ward, while up-gazing mortals
Note thy approach to morning's dazzling portals.

Thus in the summer's calm : but when the storm

Bids his obsequious winds in wrath awake,

O then to see thy full-expanded form

In triumph through the vapoury surges break,

And gambol with the gale, its rage repelling—

And hear thy voice above the tempest yelling !

Inca and Autocrat of birds ! what pity

Thou hadst not, in thy walks through ether, wan-
der'd

To classic climes, that Cæsar's endless city

Might have impress'd thy image on her standard !

The eagle might have mated with the dove,

And thou hadst been the bird of war and Jove.

And great Napoleon too, son of the sea,

Whose glory like the burning dog-star blaz'd,—

What was his boasted banner but a bee,

Or humming-bird, upon a pike-staff rais'd ?

He knew not thee, nor of thy history heard,

Else all his laurels, doubtless, thou hadst shar'd.

Yet is there by the Muse a time foretold,

When thou shalt hover o'er embattled legions,

And crowd our eastern world, infirm and old,

With cohorts from Columbia's youthful regions ;

When Europe's farthest shores shall quake with terror,

And all her watchmen shall be found in error.

Winged leviathan ! whene'er I pass
 Across the Cordillera's icy chain,
Either on foot or mounted on an ass,
 Or nobler mule, I'll struggle to obtain
More knowledge of thy life and royal sway,
 And laud thee louder in a future lay.

TO A SEA-BIRD,

ON REPEATEDLY OBSERVING IT FEEDING AFTER ME
AT THE PLOUGH.

Bird of the ocean ! why lingerest thou here,
Where the rush of the waves may not reach thine ear ?
Art thou come my friend and companion to be
When friends are departed ? sweet bird of the sea !

Thou hast left thy mate, thou hast left thy home,
On the white cliff lash'd by the spray and the foam,
And forsaken the Solway's sounding strand
For the calm repose of our mountain-land.
Of thy feather'd kind hast thou suffer'd the scorn ?
With the strife of the wind and the wave art thou worn ?
Meek pilgrim ! in this abode of peace
No fears shall annoy thee—thy sorrows shall cease.
I too have been toss'd by adversity's blast,
My sky of hope hath been overcast ;
I have warr'd with life's billows, unpitied, unknown,
A mariner weary and woe-begone.

And I have withdrawn from the jarring crowd,
From the jest of the gay, from the sneer of the proud,
And solace sought at the twilight hour
In lonely glen or woodland bower.

Bird of the ocean ! still linger here,
Nor return to the rock where the sea-waves career ;
More meet companion art thou for me
Than man with his boasted dignity.

THE IGNIS FATUUS.

What art thou, wild, fantastic thing,
 That through the hazy midnight air,
 Sailest on phosphorescent wing ?—
 Strange voyager ! thy name declare.

Art thou an alien on this earth ?
 An exile from some distant sphere ?
 Whence had'st thou thy mysterious birth ?
 Spirit ! what errand hast thou here ?

What prompts thee at this dreary hour
 To haunt the hollow, pathless dell ?
 Where is thy home ? In hoary tower
 Or hidden cavern dost thou dwell ?

Perhaps thy cheerless taper dim,
 In years unknown to sin and shame,
 Shone 'mong the shouting seraphim,
 A star of light—a living flame.

Perhaps when earth's fair orb was hung
In skilful balance in the sky,
Thy lofty note of rapture rung
Till heaven's high dome gave loud reply.

But ah ! how abject art thou now,
Son of the morning ! how forlorn !
The crown is fallen from thy brow—
The crown by happy spirits worn.

Woe to the hour when sin appear'd,
And Concord from her seat was driven !
The hour when mad Ambition rear'd
The banner of revolt in heaven.

Haply when hell's apostate band
The might of Michael's arm defied,
Thine was the tone of high command,
And thine th' insulting boast of pride.

Long shalt thou mourn thy glory gone,
And long regret thy haughty boast ;
A purer spirit fills thy throne,
And shares those honours thou hast lost.

Yet is it still thy purpose dire
To rouse on earth the rage of hell ?
To kindle Discord's slumbering fire,
And bid War's trumpet-echoes swell !

'Tis vain, fell sprite ! the thought is vain,
Bootless thy wish of war and woe ;
Justice shall yet resume her reign,
And Love and Peace shall dwell below.

Then hie thee to the dungeon deep,
Or noisome charnel, foul and damp ;
Soon morning's ray shall gild the steep,
And quench thy pale nocturnal lamp.

VERSES ON THE DEATH OF BOLIVAR.

When falls the tyrant from his throne,
 Though flattery mimic sorrow's voice,
 Yet Virtue in her dwelling lone,
 And persecuted Truth rejoice.

Not so thy fate, Columbia's chief!—
 Her stay in peace, her strength in war—
 Thy fall calls forth the patriot's grief,
 And Freedom weeps for Bolivar.

When Hope thy land no longer cheer'd,
 And Joy was silent in the hall,
 Then was thy righteous banner rear'd—
 The brave obey'd thy battle-call.

Nor slack'd the strife, nor ceas'd thy toil
 In council, or on peril's plain,
 Till far o'er continent and isle
 Re-echoed victory's lofty strain.

Rescued from thraldom's shame and care,
Freemen the green savannah trode ;
And social trust and order fair
Burst into being at thy nod.

Why then did envy circumscribe
The orbit of thy just renown ?—
Thy hand—too clean to hold a bribe,
Thy brow—too proud to wear a crown.

Why must thou like a felon fly
From faction's base, ungrateful band ?
Why must thou heave thy latest sigh
On yonder crime-polluted strand ? (1)

The cruel lords of that bright isle,
Unaw'd by worth or honour's laws,
Will pour reproaches, false and vile,
Upon thy name and holy cause.

Yet oft beneath night's friendly gloom
The sons of bondage and despair
Shall kneel unseen beside thy tomb,
And there for freedom sigh a prayer.

The marble from the mountain rent
May doubtful fame to power afford ;
A nobler, mightier monument,
Great chief ! thy doings shall record :

Andes, afar from ocean seen,
Shall hold alliance with thy name ;
Columbian groves of vernal green
Shall be thy lasting wreath of fame.

But not the undecaying hill
Thy best memorial supplies ;
A column more majestic still
Shall o'er thy ashes proudly rise :

By men who nature's rights uphold,
When fateful years have pass'd away,
Thy tale of splendour shall be told,
And sung in many a thrilling lay.

Where'er the bard shall tune the lyre,
Wherever freedom's flag shall wave,
Thy spirit shall the song inspire—
Thy deeds shall animate the brave.

THE FALL OF WARSAW,

SEPT. 7, 1831.

The Autocrat marshall'd his legions afar
Where the stream of the desert was straying ;
Gainst Poland he purpos'd unrighteous war,
For freedom her flag was displaying
In the land that has still given birth to the brave,
And which spurn'd from its bosom the traitor and slave.

Th' invaders came up like a storm on the wall,
And, Warsaw ! thy works are surrounded ;
But thy heroes will triumph, or gloriously fall
When the signal of battle is sounded.
Their pledge they redeem'd, though their numbers
were few ;
They fell in the field—the devoted—the true.

When the crown from the son of St. Louis was rent,
And misfortune his race was pursuing,
Blood flow'd in profusion, and treasures were spent,
That thrones might be rescued from ruin:
But when Poland and freedom were struggling for
life,
The nations with apathy look'd on the strife.

And hath fortune for ever abandoned the just ?
Shall their hopes and their memory perish ?
Are the laurels they won doom'd to lie in the dust,
Not again in their season to flourish ?
Must the bulwark cemented with patriot blood
Be swept from its place by iniquity's flood ?

Can royalty rein the career of the wind ?
Or calm, by its edict, the ocean ?
And may the proud march of the main be confin'd
When the waves of its might are in motion ?
No more may the spirit resolv'd to be free
Be curb'd in its course by despotic decree.

Sarmatia ! though tyranny reigns in thy towers,
Of their martyr'd defenders forsaken,
Yet the torch which was dimm'd shall relumine thy
bowers,
And liberty's call re-awaken
Thy sons from their slumbers, to shiver the chain
Which the arm of oppression hath twisted in vain.

THE PATRIOT'S SONG.

Shall I leave thee, thou land to my infancy dear,
Ere I knew aught of toil or of woe,
For the clime of the stranger, the solitude drear,
And a thousand endearments forego ?

Shall I give my lone bosom a prey to its strife ?
Must I friendship's just claims disallow ?—
No ; her breathings can cool the hot fever of life,
As the breeze fans the sea-beaten brow.

'Tis said that the comforts of plenty abound
In the wide-spreading plains of the west ;
That there an asylum of peace shall be found
Where the care-stricken wanderer may rest :

That nature uncheck'd there displays all her pride
In the forest unfading and deep ;
That the river rolls onward its ocean-like tide,
Encircling broad realms in its sweep.

But is there a spot in that far-distant land
Where Fancy or Feeling may dwell ?
Or how shall the heart of the exile expand
Untouch'd by Society's spell ?

Though thy children, Old Albyn ! adversity bear,
As forlorn o'er thy mountains they roam,
Yet I've found—what in vain I should seek for else-
where—
I have found 'mong these mountains a home.

How lovely the beam on thy moorland appears,
As it streams from the eye of the morn !
And how comely the garment that evening wears
When the day of its glories is shorn !

Ah ! strong are the ties that the Patriot bind,
Fair isle of the sea ! to thy shore ;—
The turf that he treads, by the best of their kind—
By the bravest, was trodden before.

Nor is there a field—not a foot of thy soil,
In dale, or on mountain-land dun,
Unmark'd in the annals of chivalrous toil,
Ere concord its conquest had won.

The rill hath a voice from the rock as it pours ;
It comes from the glen on the gale ;
For the life-blood of martyrs hath hallow'd thy moors,
And their names are rever'd in the vale.

How sacred the stone that, remote on the heath,
O'er the bones of the righteous was laid,
Who triumph'd in death o'er the foes of their faith,
When the banner of truth was display'd !

And sweet are the songs of the land of my love,
And soothing their tones to the soul ;
Or, lofty and loud like the thunder above,
On the storm-cloud of passion they roll.

While summer beyond the Atlantic's wide waste
A gaudier garb may assume,
My country ! thou boastest the verdure of taste,
And thy glories immortally bloom.

No ; I will not forsake thee, thou land of my lay !
The scorn of the stranger to brave :
On thy lea I have revell'd in youth's sunny ray,
And thy wild-flowers shall spangle my grave.

WHAT IS LIFE?

What is life? O! in youth (for then fancy would
 stray
 Through her own lovely Eden) its path was per-
 fum'd;
 But years, while they wafted its sweetness away,
 Have nourish'd rank weeds where the roses once
 bloom'd.

What is life? O! in youth, ere misfortune's cold
 wind
 Had blown its rough blast, 'twas a vale of repose;
 Ere crime had disturb'd the blest calm of the mind—
 Or the dark clouds of grief on its sunshine arose.

What is life? 'Tis a field where wild passions are
 warring,
 Where ties, e'en the dearest, asunder are rent:
 Its emblem is found in the elements jarring,
 Whose fury still rages, but never is spent.

What is life ? 'Tis the scene of hope's mournful
prostration

Before the dread throne of the tyrant Despair—
One short hour is brighten'd with joy's exultation,
The next—only sorrow and darkness are there.

What is life ? 'Tis a region where objects ideal
Engross every wish, and our reason enchain ;
Where honours are empty, and pleasures unreal ;
Where power is but weakness, and wealth is in vain.

What is life ? 'Tis a dream in the portal of death—
Its date is a moment, its space is a span :
A shadow, a vapour, a bubble, a breath—
Yes, such is the treasure so valued by man !

VERSES

ON HEARING THE SONG OF THE THRUSH FOR THE
FIRST TIME IN THE SEASON, FEB. 1829.

Gentle herald of spring ! thou art welcome again
To the woodlands that oft have re-echoed thy song,
When Aurora arose from her couch on the main,
And when Eve spread its shade the deep valley along.

Though now thy abode is the bough of the pine,
Though the copsewood is wither'd, the forest-tree
bare ;
The hazel and hawthorn shall yet intertwine
Their foliage, the bower of thy choice to prepare.

Though thou mournest the blast from the cold, cloudy
north,
As it sweeps down the dale with monotonous moan ;
Yet the sunbeams of summer shall quickly burst forth,
And exalt thy faint warblings to extacy's tone.

I listen'd, sweet bird ! in the spring-day of youth,
With delight to thy lay, that could passion assuage :
And O, that its soft-falling echoes might soothe
The sorrows that furrow the forehead of age !

Thy song is the same ; but how chang'd all besides !
Life's bright morning-visions, ah ! where are ye fled ?
O'er pleasures departed my memory glides,
And I weep for their loss, as one weeps for the dead.

That hope once was mine which no limits might bound,
And friendship to me all its sweets did impart ;
But where are the joys that such hope should have
crown'd ?
And where now, O where is the friend of my heart ?

Yes, 'twas Hope the Enchantress that shew'd me
man's state
All spangled with flowers of perennial bloom :
But the spell is dissolv'd, and the fiat of fate
With thorns hath surrounded my path to the tomb.

Yet, let not these wailings thy melody mar ;
Spring's musical harbinger ! sweet be thy strain,
As thoughtful I gaze on yon new-risen star—
And when morning returns let me hear it again

Can that Being who taught thy dark bosom to glow
With those raptures which seraphs beatified share,—

Can he willingly suffer his offspring to know
The horrors of doubt, or the pangs of despair?

He wills it, and winter recedes to the pole;
He speaks, and the darkness gives place to the day;
And joy shall resume its lost seat in my soul,
At His mandate, whom nature is bound to obey.

SONNET TO ESKDALEMUIR-PEN.

Eskdalemuir Pen is one of the most elevated points of the mountainous range which divides the counties of Dumfries and Selkirk, and the parishes of Eskdalemuir and Etterick. It is commonly called Etterick Pen, but with great injustice ; the features of a *pen* (peak) being distinguishable only, or chiefly, on that side of the mountain which is towards Dumfries-shire.

Thou parent mountain of my native dale !
 Thou'rt lovelier in thy nakedness to me
 Than woods that wave in fragrant Araby,
 Or clustering flowers that spangle Tempe's vale.
 Thou'rt lovelier—for I saw thee touch the sky,
 In infancy, ere care my breast had wounded ;
 And deem'd that thy strong cliffs of dusky dye
 Man's habitation and his wishes bounded.
 Not the high Alps, nor Andes higher far,
 Can fix, like thee, my fancy's wandering eye,
 Whether the sunbeams on thy bosom lie,
 Or clouds around thee roll, and tempests war ;
 Whether thy brow be deck'd with heaven's bright bow,
 Or crown'd with coronet of stainless snow.

THE STONE OF BLOOD.

High on the heathy mountain, wild and lone,
 Where nature in a garb of gloom appears,
 Rises a rough, unhewn, columnar stone,
 Rude monument of long-departed years.

It tells of deeds of shame, and blackest guilt,
 Though mystery's veil the legend now surrounds ;
 A sire and son their life's blood idly spilt—
 They met, and fought, and fell by mutual wounds.

The spot seems dreary as the gate of death ;
 The lonely shepherd shudders while his tread
 Is on the hillock, 'mong the blasted heath,
 Where rot the bones of the accursed dead.

Still on the place of strife, the ruddy tinge
 Of blood is seen, an object of dismay,
 Which time, with lenient hand, shall ne'er expunge,
 Nor all the rains of winter wash away.

Perch'd on the hoary pillar's pointed peak,
Th' ill-omen'd raven flaps his clotted wings,
And, gorg'd with carrion, whets his gory beak,
And o'er the murderer's grave harsh requiem sings.

Oft have th' avenging thunders of heaven
In fury visited the tainted ground ;
The earth is pierc'd, the granite rocks are riven,
And thrown in cumbrous fragments all around.

And oft before the shepherd's startled eyes,
When misty wreaths the mountain close infold,
Strange warrior-shapes in rusty mail arise,—
Grim and gigantic, like the men of old.

And when the night-cloud falls, and all is still,
The awe-struck peasant in the vale below
Hears sounds of terror from the haunted hill,
And shrieks that tell of more than mortal woe.

I saw the blood-stain'd spot.—'Twas summer-tide—
As lights the linnet in her downy nest,
So gently evening fell ; and I descried
Her star of silver in the distant west :

That fair, propitious star, beneath whose ray,
When day is past with its perplexing dream,
The man of contemplation loves to stray,
With wisdom for his teacher and his theme.

But nought of evening's tranquil, calm delight
I felt ; involved in horror's murkiest shade,
Methought the angry spirits of the night
Against me all their unseen hosts array'd.

We fondly gaze with melancholy pride
On fields of fame where slumber the renown'd,—
The brave who combated by freedom's side—
And count the turf that wraps them holy ground.

But in your desert paths, ye uplands dun !
We ponder not upon the great or good ;
The inauspicious solitude we shun,
And pass with hasty steps the stone of blood.

ODE TO POVERTY.

Hail ! mighty power ! who o'er my lot
 President uncontrolled and free ;
 Sole ruler of the rural cot,
 I bid thee hail, dread Poverty !
 Thine aid I crave to guide my strain,
 Nor shall I supplicate in vain.

When on this world of woe and toil,
 A helpless stranger I was cast,
 Like mariner on desert isle,
 The sport and victim of the blast,
 The russet robe was o'er me flung,
 And to thy cold, lean hand I clung.

In youth I felt thy guardian care ;
 Each saving, self-denying rule,
 Needful for those of fortune spare,
 I learn'd and practis'd in thy school :
 And of my lengthen'd life at large
 Thou still hast taken special charge.

Much have I seen, much more I've heard
Of chance and change in this vain world,—
The low to high estate preferr'd—
From high estate the haughty hurl'd ;
But chance or change ne'er pass'd on me :
I'm still thy subject, Poverty !

Ah ! how unwise are they who scorn
Thy homely garb and humble fare ;
Who scale the tropic's burning bourne
Ideal happiness to share :
They tread the wild, and plough the wave,
In quest of gold—but find a grave.

There are who know thee but by name,
Who spurn thy salutary laws ;
And count thy mark a badge of shame,
And hold it sin to own thy cause :
Fools that they are ! they never knew
Thy guiltless pride, thy spirit true.

Full oft in danger's darkest day
Thy sons have prov'd their country's shield,
When wealth's effeminate array
Appear'd not on the battle-field :—
'Twas their's to grasp the patriot-brand
That dropp'd from luxury's nerveless hand.

Full oft, when wealth-engender'd crime
Roll'd o'er the land its whelming tide,

Their fervent faith and hope sublime
Have stable prov'd, though sorely tried :
In virtue's heaven-ward path they trode,
When pleasure's sons forsook their God.

And yet nor stone nor poet's strain
Records their honours undefil'd ;
Even poesy would weave in vain
The laurel wreath for penury's child :
Should fashion sneer, or fortune frown,
'Twould wither ere the sun went down.

But greater, happier far is he,
More ample his reward of praise—
Though he should misery's kinsman be,
Though hardships cloud his earthly days—
Who triumphs in temptation's hour,
Than he who wins the warlike tower.

What though he may not write his name
On history's ever-living page !
What though the thrilling trump of fame
Echo it not from age to age !
'Tis blazon'd bright in realms on high,
Enroll'd in records of the sky.

What though the hireling bard be mute,
When humble worth for notice calls !
There wants not voice of harp and lute
To hymn it high in heavenly halls ;

Around the cell where virtue weeps,
His nightly watch the seraph keeps.

If peace of mind your thoughts employ,
Ye restless, murmuring sons of earth !
Ah ! shun the splendid haunts of joy—
Peace dwells not with unholy mirth ;
But oft amidst a crowd of woes,
As in the desert dwells the rose.

Thick fly the hostile shafts of fate,
And wreck and ruin mark their course,
But the pure spirit, firm, sedate,
Nor feels their flight, nor fears its force.
So storms the ocean's surface sweep,
While calm below the waters sleep.

O ! may internal peace be mine,
Though outward woes urge on their war ;
And, Hope ! do thou my path define,
And light it with thy radiant star :
Thou Hope, who, through the shades of sorrow,
Canst trace the dawn of joy's bright morrow.

'TWAS A CALM SUMMER EVE.

'Twas a calm summer eve ; scarce the aspen leaf trembled,

As it hung o'er the streamlet, soft-stealing beneath ;
On Lochfell's brown summit the night-clouds assembled,

And the breeze that had borne them was hush'd
on the heath ;

When, escap'd from the world, from its malice and
scorn,

To ease my sad bosom, oppress'd and care-worn,
Unheeded and lonely,

In nature's ear only,

I thus made my plaint as I wander'd forlorn :

Ye fast-deep'ning shades that are falling around me !

I welcom'd you once as the heralds of joy,
When the soft, silken fetters of youthful love bound
me

To the maid—so she look'd—of the truth-speaking
eye.

Then night shone with glories, unrivall'd by day,
With its beams slow-receding—I chid their delay—
For love's luring light
Before me blaz'd bright
In the bower of my fair one, and mark'd my glad way.

But now—while I speak my rack'd heart seems to
sever—

(Should falsehood be found in a creature so fair)
She has left me for wealth—she has left me for ever—
She has left me—the victim of love and despair.
Ye shades that are falling so peaceful and sweet !
Ye wavelets of silver that break at my feet !

You cannot bestow
Comfort, gladness—ah ! no ;
With its impulse again shall my bosom ne'er beat.

AN EVENING THOUGHT.

Behind the western mountain-wall
 The wearied sun hath found repose ;
 And, freed from care's consuming thrall,
 Mortals their aching eyelids close.
 Mild Evening ! ever dear to those
 Who love to muse in grove or glen,
 Ah ! still my heart with joy o'erflows
 To meet with thee again.

Sweet is thy breath upon the breeze,
 By flowery field or falling stream ;
 While like the waves of summer seas
 The undulating harvests seem ;—
 While, from the west, day's latest gleam
 A languid lustre sheds afar,
 Till Dian shed a richer beam
 From her ascending car.

Now her attendant starry train
 Appears in rank and order due,

Like golden bark amid the main—
Yon liquid field of stainless blue.
Bold infidel ! arise and view
The workings of omnific skill,
Then, own the tale of wisdom true—
Be humble and be still.

RECOLLECTIONS OF YOUTH.

Slow move the hours of care and toil,
Unlike youth's gay, fantastic dream ;
When life appear'd a kindly soil
Water'd by pleasure's gentle stream.

Short-lived and fleeting as the wind !
The charming landscape, spreading fair,
Time's busy flight hath thrown behind,
And only Memory loiters there.

Yes, still my fancy longs to trace,
In fond review, each early scene,
Which rolling years can ne'er efface,
Though rolling seasons intervene.

The village-green, with daisies deck'd,
And violets, dipp'd in deepest dye,
Whose growth my playful frolics check'd—
Meet emblem of mortality ;

The dimpling rivulet, pure and sheen,
Whose waters oft my limbs did lave,
Its banks adorn'd with willows green,
Low drooping o'er the winding wave ;

The rapid mountain-brook that pour'd
Through rugged rocks, asunder riven ;
The ivy'd precipice, that lower'd
In giant pride from earth to heaven ;

The od'rous birch, the hawthorn gray,
Whose boughs would closely intertwine,
Where oft in careless ease I lay
To mark the summer-sun's decline ;—

These all had charms ; but now no more
I own the powerful, pleasing spell ;
The smile is fled that once they wore—
To youthful joys I bid farewell !

My native hills, abrupt and bold,
Still lift their haughty heads on high ;
The crystal fountain still is cold,
And still its streamlet trickles by :

Still nature paints each object fair,
In youth's fond eye she's lovely still ;
But what can ease the load of care ?
Or pleasure's empty fountain fill ?

REFLECTIONS IN A CHURCH-YARD.

The dying day-beam faintly shone ;
In the burial-field I stood alone ;
The world of life from before me fled,
And I held communion with the dead.
I mark'd affection's tribute paid,
I mark'd the sculptor's art display'd,
But each letter'd stone to my mind appear'd
A trophy that conquering death had rear'd ;
And I deem'd the foul weeds waving round
A wreath that the tyrant's forehead bound.

I gaz'd on the spot where the mighty lay,
But their day of power had pass'd away ;
And the column charg'd with flattering rhyme
Already shrunk from the touch of time.
And there was the victim of heaviest woes
Stretch'd on his couch of dreamless repose :
The voice of his wailing no more was heard, —
The prayer in agony preferr'd ;

The tempest that toss'd him was hush'd to a calm,
His wounds had been heal'd by oblivion's balm ;
His doubts were remov'd, his wants were supplied,
Death granted in pity what life had denied.

There too was he who in youth's bright prime,
Bade adieu to life, and the toys of time ;

He look'd to years of coming bliss,

For health and buoyant hope were his ;

No cares his short-liv'd course encumber'd,

Nor deem'd he that his days were number'd ;

His bark, scarce launch'd on passion's wave,

Found a safe haven in the grave.

There slept the babe, rescued betimes

From coming perils, cares, and crimes :

Though dealt in anger seem'd the stroke

That nature's bands asunder broke,—

Death took the child—'twas mercy's plan,—

That justice stern might spare the man.

I trode upon the sordid slave

Who homage mean to Mammon gave ;

His soul was cast in coarsest mould ;

Poor wretch ! he knew no god but gold.

No thought was his of holy birth ;

No feeling foreign to this earth ;

And when death robb'd him of his store,

He lost his gods—what had he more ?

The western sky had lost its glow,

The evening clouds roll'd dark and low,

But yet methought night's deepest gloom
Descended on the worldling's tomb.

Darkness prevall'd, and silence dread
Wav'd his broad banner o'er the dead.
The dead !—No plaint, no cry of wrong
Is heard their crowded ranks among ;
No mutinous speech, no murmuring
Against the mandate of their king.
Quiescent children of the dust,
They wrangle not for power or trust ;
Contested rights they value not,
No scheme of rash reform they plot :
No direful change the years bring round ;
Disorder dwells not under ground.

Yet is there a voice from the land of death
More thrilling far than the war-trump's breath :
That voice burst forth at the birth of crime,
It reaches earth's remotest clime ;
It is heard when day dawns on the dale,
It mingles with the midnight gale ;
It echoes through the embattled tower,
'Tis borne away to beauty's bower ;
It checks the mirth of the banquet-hall,
Its words are writ on the palace-wall.

The dead !—In fancy's, in wisdom's ear,
They speak, though fools refuse to hear ;

More powerful is their mute appeal
Than aught that language may reveal.
They tell of nature's closing strife,
Of that dark bourne which limits life,
Of fears that giant-like assail
The pilgrim in death's dreary vale.
They tell the young, the gay, the proud,
That youth is like the morning cloud,
That pleasure's hour will quickly pass,
That human glory is but grass,
That man's erect, angelic form
Shall for its kinsman own the worm.

Ye slumbering hosts ! soon shall your name
Nor mention nor remembrance claim ;
Soon shall your follies, or your worth,
Find no memorial on earth ;
Death rides in triumph o'er your clay,
But the deathless spirits—ah ! where are they ?

FAREWELL TO SUMMER

Farewell to Summer with all his flowers !
Farewell to the song of the sylvan bowers !
Farewell to the sunbeams that redd'n'd the fell !
To Summer with all his delights farewell !

He came on the gladsome morn of May,
When the drops of dew on the primrose lay,
When the swallow clung to the windowed wall,
And the schoolboy repeated the cuckoo's call ;
When the bush was in bud and the fern was green,
Down in our valley young Summer was seen.

The welcome we gave him was warm and sincere ;
We hailed him lord of the blooming year ;
For his smile was sweet and his aspect bland,
As he gazed around on a grateful land.
But a veil o'er the visage of nature was cast,
The glory of Summer was fading fast ;

His dazzling shield had received a blot,
Which dimmed its blaze, though we wist it not ;
And the scented breeze and the radiant beam
Are now no more than a pleasant dream.
The withered leaves by the winds were strown,
His downy seed the thistle had sown ;
Her nest by the window the swallow had left
The woodland was mute like a thing bereft ;
The little birds of the wandering wing
O'er the seas of the south were voyaging,
And only the redbreast's dirge-like note
Was heard from the eaves of the thatched cot.
The cloud hung low and the gale blew chill,
The hoar-frost whitened the distant hill,
And, marking the signal, our visitant gay
Mounted his chariot and hied him away.
Ah ! long and cheerless the season must be
Ere Summer return with his wonted glee.

Will the eye that outrivalled his lustre before
Brighten when Summer comes back to our shore ?
Will the peaceful breast and the placid brow
Be calm and unclouded then, as they're now ?
Shall guiltless pleasure and juvenile mirth
Revel uncheck'd on the cottager's hearth ?
The thought is presumptuous. Tears shall be shed
O'er the woes of the living, the graves of the dead :
The arrow is flying—the victim shall fall.—
When Summer returns, he returns not to all.

Yet, though man sit in sackcloth, the earth and the
sky

Shall be deck'd in their garments of gorgeous dye ;
Streamlet, and forest, and mountain grey
Again shall exult in the quickening ray ;
And echo shall wake from her trance in the dell.—
Giver of gladness, till then farewell !

Farewell to Summer with all his flowers !
Farewell to the song of the sylvan bowers !
Farewell to the sunbeams that reddened the fell !—
To Summer with all his delights farewell !

October 1832.

VERSES

ON THE DEATH OF A PIOUS AND BENEVOLENT LADY.

The voice of woe was heard in the dale,
 Matron and maid were mourning ;
 Their friend had gone to that distant land
 Whence there is no returning.

Faces whose smile once gladdened the hall
 Are woe-begone and weary ;
 The garnished grot in the greenwood shade
 Seems desolate and dreary.

And long may the helpless orphan sigh,
 Long may the widow bewail her ;
 The tear shall flow from the sunken eye,
 And the furrowed cheek grow paler.

Wisdom and genius embellished her mind,
 In youth's flow'ry path they had found her ;
 Yet the goodness that glowed in her feeling heart
 Threw a holier radiance around her.

Disease had come, and its fatal work
By slow degrees was proceeding ;
Nor might she remain, though in secret her cause
The poor and the pious were pleading.

Nature might shrink while her mortal part
Under pain's heavy pressure was pining,
But the spirit within was pure and bright,
Like the sun in the west declining.

The herald of mercy was sent, and no more
In her anguish the hour might she number ;
The hand of death had her eyelids closed,
And sound and serene was her slumber.

Glory may circle the hero's brow
When he lies on the field of slaughter—
Far nobler is the trophy won
By faith's departing daughter.

Ye sorrowing sisters ! ye watched by her couch
Till her pulse lost its life-giving motion,
But sudden and sad must the tidings be
To the brothers afar on the ocean.

Weep not for the dead who have died in peace :
Though their flesh in the dust is consuming,
Their labours of love shall a monument raise,
And their memory shall ever be blooming.

To the earth-bounded eye the career of the just
May close in the night-cloud of sorrow ;
Yet the star of hope sheds a ray through the gloom,
And joy shall break forth on the morrow.

THE SONG OF MOSES.

EXODUS XV. 1—18. PARAPHRASED.

We will tell of the deeds that Jehovah hath done ;
 The arm of his might hath the victory won.
 The ruthless enslaver our ruin decreed,
 And the spearman rushed forth on the fleet-footed
 steed :—

Over horseman and horse the huge sea-billows fell,
 And they sunk like a stone in its wild ocean-swell.

Wake the harp ; let the feelings that glow in each
 breast
 By its deepest, its loftiest tones be expressed.
 He who launches in anger the lightnings of war
 Was the God of our fathers in regions afar ;
 And still, while yon symbol we mark in the sky,
 We cherish the thought that our guardian is nigh.

How brief was the boast of tyrannical force !—
 The chariot of battle was checked in its course ;

The plume of the chief and the rich-woven vest
Like the sea-weed were borne o'er the wave's hoary
crest ;
And they who had worn them, the high-born, the
brave,
In ocean's unsounded abyss found a grave.

Omnipotent Leader ! our safety we owe
To thy right hand of power which inflicted the blow ;
Pretensions to merit we humbly disclaim,
For thine was the triumph, and thine is the fame :
Thy fury was kindled, the rebels were quell'd,
While the cause of the faithful thy mercy upheld.

When the cliffs of Baal-zephon hung frowningly
o'er us,
When our foes were behind and the billows before us,
Thy goodness unwearied and limitless power
Appear for our aid in that perilous hour ;
The ocean was cleft, and like adamant stood,
And a path was prepar'd through the midst of the
flood.

“ Away ye protectors of Egypt's bright realm !
Prepare the habergeon, and furbish the helm ;
Delay not, return not till vengeance be pour'd
On the slaves who have dared to escape from their lord ;
Till your swords with the blood of the traitors be dyed.”
The tyrant thus spoke in the hall of his pride.

How vain was the menacing splendour of war !
How bootless the speed of the swift-rolling car !
From the princes of Zoan strength seemed to depart ;
They bowed to their doom, unresisting, inert :—
Thou causedst thy winds o'er the waters to sweep,
And the host of the proud was entombed in the deep.

Let thy goings of Majesty still be our theme,
Source of all being ! Creator supreme !
None of the gods to whom worship is given
May strive with the Ruler whose throne is in heaven !
Their altars shall crumble, their honours decay,
But the power of the Highest is stablished for aye.

Spirit of purity, dwelling in light !
In homage before thee our voices unite :
With wonder we gaze on the works thou hast made,
But what eye may behold all thy glory displayed !
Thy holiness, blended with kindness and love,
Awakens the song of the seraphs above.

The heathen shall flee to the cave and the hold
When the marvellous tidings in Canaan are told ;
In dismay shall the nobles of Edom assemble,
And Moab ! thy mighty in battle shall tremble ;
They shall stand on their border, with terror oppress'd,
Till the tribes have gone up to the land of their rest.

Thou shalt watch o'er thy chosen, thy care shall not
cease

Till they come to the mountain of Zion in peace ;
To the place in thy purpose and promise prepared,
Where thy Name and thy truth shall be known and
declared :

Though now in the desert like pilgrims we roam,
Thy temple, thy law, shall yet hallow our home.

Like a garment the earth shall decay and wax old,
Yon broad azure vault like a scroll shall be rolled ;
Each starlet that sparkles on heaven's bright brow
Shall fall like the fig from the wind-shaken bough ;
But the Rock of our trust shall unaltered remain—
Jehovah for ever and ever shall reign.

THE GADFLY.

Ho ! there he cometh, on the light breeze bounding,
 The Gadfly, champion-like, from head to tail
 Cased in a shining suit of silvery mail,
 Some hostile enterprize forsooth propounding ;
 For not a fighting dandy in all France
 Can cope with him in brandishing a lance.

Now, from his lofty station, fierce as Hannibal
 From the high Alps, he pounces on my hand,
 And cuts it up, plying his polished brand
 With all the zest with which New Zealand cannibal
 Devours his meal. Ah ! how he loves to linger,
 And sip the blood-drops oozing from my finger.

Wretch ! I could fracture with the greatest ease
 Each bony member of thy dwarfish body,
 And mar thy merriment and gormandizing, should I
 Resort to such severe extremities ;
 But since thou canst suggest a moral lesson,
 Thy swelling chest my thumb shall never press on.

Gadfly ! thy grandsire earned much notoriety ;
 (So history avers. I take my notes
 From Gibbon, who some other person quotes)
 He fairly changed the aspect of society ;
 And by a simple surgical adventure
 Convulsed the nations to the very centre.

In ancient times dwelt tribes more rude than any
 We read of, somewhere by the lake Meotis,
 In woods, 'mong marshes, in rock-girdled grottoes,
 Huns and Heruli, Gepidæ, Alani.—
 Grammarians, is it Heruli, or Herûle ?
 Perhaps I have not placed the accent truly.

Sons of the wild, their forte was rearing cattle ;
 Nothing they knew of optics or geography—
 Nothing of criticism, nor even typography—
 They'd no gazettes t' immortalize a battle ;
 But, though in finer arts their skill was narrow,
 Well could they bend the bow and aim the arrow.

The weather was superb, though moist and showery ;
 The year had reached the intersecting line
 Between improvement and begun decline,
 But still the fields were fair and fresh and flowery,
 When, lo ! a herd of Scythia's purest breed,
 Kept by an armed band, went forth to feed.

Gadflies are counted quite a pest in Tartary :

The one in question, mindful of his trade,
A dash upon a lusty bullock made,
And with his sharp proboscis pierced an artery.
With tail erect, away the victim runs,
And at his heels, hurra ! a host of Huns.

Philosophers have traced a similarity

Between the rational and the brute creation
Regarding progress in civilization,
Degeneracy that is, misnamed in charity :
When man is savage, hardy, bold and free,
His beast is not a whit more tame than he.

The brute had never floundered in the yoke ;

He never had been saddled, as is done
In the imperial realm of Prester John :
Fleet as the roe, pursuit he seemed to mock,
And quickly passed the country's craggy barriers ;
The Calmucks following like a pack of harriers.

Long-winded were they, light of foot and strong too ;

They cleared the pass.—Then, what a sight was
there !

Doubtless they wondered greatly where they were,
And who the new-discovered lands belonged to.
For they had thought the forests that surrounded
Their native fens the world of being bounded.

Cried royal Mundzuk, seated on his charger,
“ Offspring of Riphath ! there’s a prize before ye !
Another world, all glancing in its glory ;
Fairer than ours, and evidently larger
On, on to the conquest, all ye warrior-hives !
And leave the care of cattle to your wives,”

Shouted the Khan. No more they coursed the bullock ;
(Perhaps in some deep quagmire he was drowned,
Or, possibly respite at last he found
From stinging pain upon some breezy hillock)
But chiefs were chosen, countless clans embattled,
And battle-axes rung and quivers rattled.

The war rolled onward, westward, like a wave ;
The pagan gods of Scythia were propitious ;
Nor might the last, the bravest Roman, Ætius,
The seven-hilled city from perdition save :
Proud Cæsar, with his senators, was humbled,
And from his throne eventually tumbled.

What great events from small beginnings rise !
Though the remark may seem a little trite,
Its repetition here I reckon right,
For 'tis the moral which my tale supplies.—
The Gadfly only bit the bullock’s neck,
And lo ! the Roman Empire went to wreck !

ACROSTIC

ON RECEIVING A SNUFF-BOX.

M adam, my warmest thanks to you belong—
 I f gratitude may be express'd in song—
 S o well your welcome present suits my taste,
 S o much my happiness on *snuff* is plac'd.

M y snuff-box—though the Temperance-zealots say
 A ll sorts of harsh things in their canting way—
 R enders good service to my mind o'erwrought,
 G ives animation to the flagging thought,
 A nd much alleviates the yoke of care,
 R esolving *pinches* into empty air :
 E ven while I grapple thus with tune and time,
 T h' inspiring atoms regulate the rhyme.

M ay all the joys which health and wealth bestow,
 O r, rather those from virtuous deeds that flow,
 F ollow your footsteps as through life you roam,
 F ind in your dwelling and your breast a home ;
 A nd, when old age the bloom of health shall blight,
 T hrow o'er your latest path a cheering light.



NOTES.

THE VALE OF ESK.

Note 1, Stanza 3.

*And mighty voices from the tomb invite
The traveller to the shores which once were free.*

The renovation and independence of Greece can scarcely be inferred from the circumstance of the barbarians of the West having given a successor to Leonidas.

Note 2, Stanza 6.

*Deep is the dell ' whence, fresh and undefiled,
The infant Esk bounds on his course away.*

The Esk, the most easterly river of Dumfries-shire, has its source in the chain of mountains which separates that county from those of Roxburgh and Selkirk : the streams that rise on the northern side of the range falling into the Tweed, while those which flow from its south side empty themselves into the Solway Firth.

Note 3, Stanza 10.

Th' imposing vestiges of Roman war.

On many of the hills of Eskdale, the traces of ancient encampments are still visible. They are met with on the farms of Over Cassock, Castlehill, Yetbyre, and Tanlawhill, in the parish of Eskdalemuir; and at Bailiehill, Shiel, Enzieholm, &c. in the parish of Westerkirk. A very remarkable encampment of the square form, was discovered in 1810 by the Reverend Dr. Brown, minister of Eskdalemuir, on the farm of Raeburnfoot in that parish. Both the outer and inner fosse, except on the west side, which has been worn away by the Esk—are well defined. The fosse next the hill is twelve feet deep and twenty feet wide; the others are five feet deep and twenty feet wide; the gates being likewise twenty feet in width. It includes, at present, an area of five English acres, one rood, and thirty poles: but in its original state, supposing the length on either side of the gates to have been equal, it must have contained six acres, three roods, and twenty-four poles. It is to be regretted that this striking memorial of the olden times has, within these few years, been disfigured by the plough, and especially by those paltry defences against cattle denominated “feal dykes.”

Note 4, Stanza 11.

*And, mark ye! on the river's eastern shore
Yon circular stones.*

On the farm of Coat, in the parish of Eskdalemuir, there are two of those circles of erect stones, which are supposed

by some to have been Druidical temples. The one is about ninety feet in circumference; the other, of which a segment has been swept away by the river, measures nearly 340 feet.

Note 5, Stanza 13.

Yet are there scenes of holier interest still.

Tradition relates that during the “killing time” in the tyrannical reign of Charles II., the Covenanters frequently assembled for divine worship among the brushwood which then covered the beautifully wild banks of the Esk in its course through the farms of Castlehill and Yetbyre; the wood affording them a screen from the fury of their persecutors. It is even said that a part of the “Hind let loose,” a book of some note in the religious controversies of the times, was written by Mr. Shiel while “under hiding” in those sequestered dells.

Note 6, Stanza 15.

*The darksome cave,
Beneath whose fall of foam, old legends say,
In lonely state the Pictish monarch lay.*

The White and Black Esk meet at the southern extremity of the parish of Eskdalemuir. The united stream, after “thundering through” a formidable barrier of rugged crags, forms a deep eddy, called the “King-pool,” where tradition says a Pictish prince of the name of Schaw was drowned, while endeavouring to escape from the pursuing Saxons, who

had defeated him in battle. A stone marking his grave is still shown on the Shawrigg, a hill in the neighbourhood.

Note 7, Stanza 17.

While on its airy site the school appears.

The parochial school of Westerkirk.

Note 8, Stanza 19.

They nobly burst obscurity's strong bar.

Perhaps few districts in the kingdom, of similar extent, and with an equal population, can boast of having produced so many young men who have risen to eminence in various professions, and done honour to themselves and their country, as the Vale of Esk has sent forth. Even among the lower classes, whose means of acquiring knowledge are comparatively limited, intelligence and information are very generally diffused. To the establishment of public libraries and societies, having for their object the improvement of the mind, this favourable state of things is partly to be attributed. Indeed, a taste for reading and literary conversation is so prevalent among the peasantry of Eskdale, that a Yorkshire Wool-stapler could not help remarking, that they were the most wonderful people he had ever met with, for the very shepherds " tolk'd about deep stooff."

Note 9, Stanza 24.

*The grotto of the glen,
Whose garnish'd courts employed my feeble pen.*

See (page 22,) the verses entitled “An evening in the late Miss Wilhelmina Malcolm’s Museum, Burnfoot.”

Note 10, Stanza 25.

Yet would I linger in Daldarran’s bowers.

Daldarran—the ancient name of Westerhall, the seat of Sir Frederick George Johnstone, Baronet, the representative of an old and much respected family in Eskdale. In the last century, the Johnstones of Westerhall were not more distinguished by their patriotism and public services than for the patronage they afforded to youthful merit; a department of benevolence in which they were followed by the Pasleys of Craig; as these last have been succeeded by the Malcolms of Burnfoot.

Note 11, Stanza 26.

The Ducal dome.

Langholm Lodge, a seat of the Duke of Buccleuch.

Note 12, Stanza 27.

The graceful spire is rising on my view.

The town of Langholm, noted for the picturesque scenery in its neighbourhood, is situated near the confluence of the Esk, the Ewis, and the Wauchope. The parent river, considerably enlarged with the waters of its tributaries, after passing the village, enters the district of Canobie, whose splendid woods are the admiration of every traveller; the road between Langholm and Langtown in Cumberland being accounted one of the most delightful stages in the kingdom.

Note 13, Stanza 32.

The palace-fort held by the pious brave, &c.

The ancient Castle of Wauchope—the ruins of which are now denominated Wauchope Waas (Walls)—with the lands adjoining, was bestowed, in the eleventh century, by king Malcolm Canmore, upon some adventurers who had followed that prince from England, where he resided for a considerable time before he ascended the Scottish throne. The new settlers took the name of Lindsay, from the manor of Lindsai in Essex, their original place of residence; and from them all the families of that name in Scotland are said to be descended. At a later period, the proprietor of Wauchope-dale, in testimony of his piety and zeal for religion, bequeathed the castle and part of the lands to the Knights Templars—one of those munificent bequests which contributed to support the dignity and reward the heroism of that distinguish-

ed brotherhood. At what particular time the property was secularized, the writer has not been able to ascertain; but it is most likely that it was at the Reformation.

Note 14, Stanza 35.

And there it was that Mickle strung the lyre.

William Julius Mickle, the author of a volume of poems—including “*Pollio, an Elegiac Ode*,” and the translation of Camoens’ *Lusiad*, the subject of which is the discovery of the way to India round the Cape of Good Hope by Vasco de Gama, A. D. 1497,—was the son of the Reverend Alexander Mickle, minister of Langholm. The poet was born 29th September 1734, in Langholm, and spent his juvenile years at the manse, or parsonage house, which then “stood on the site of the old castle of Wauchope, amid the traces of walls and deep ditches, and skirted by the stream which gives name to the dale, with its steep rocks and pendent woods.”

Note 15, Stanza 39.

Red blaz'd the beacon-flame on Liddal's side.

The conterminous districts of Eskdale and Liddesdale, from their local situation, were peculiarly subject to the incursions of the English Borderers in the age of feudalism.

Note 16, Stanza 40.

*Kinsman or clansman fettered and immured
By the revengeful foe in dungeon deep.*

More than one exploit of the nature here referred to are recorded in the minstrelsy of ancient times. The liberation, by Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuch, of one of his retainers, who had been treacherously carried off and imprisoned in Carlisle Castle, in 1596, furnishes a striking instance of the daring spirit which characterised the Borderers at that period.

Note 17, Stanza 41.

*When the Black Douglas bands—
Against their king and country were arrayed, &c.*

See note to “Burn and Byken,” page 185.

Note 18, Stanza 42.

*And oft the dalesmen tell, with shame and grief,
Of the disastrous doings of that morn, &c.*

The ancient proprietors of the upper part of Eskdale are said to have been of the clan Beattison, or Beattie—who held their rights of the king, till the reign of James the Fifth; when that monarch conferred the superiority of their lands on Robert Lord Maxwell, for his good conduct in negotiating, along with Cardinal Beaton, the marriage-treaty between his master and Mary of Guise. The donation included the *Five*

Kirks of Eskdale, which at that time were Upper and Nether Ewis, Wauchope, Staplegordon and Westerkirk, of which last parish Eskdalemuir was then an appendage. Lord Maxwell having come to take formal possession of the Eskdalemuir part of his estate, summoned the inhabitants to meet him at Dumfedling, which was one of the two Baronies of Eskdale—Staplegordon being the other—where justice was administered and business transacted ; and offered the Beattie's rights to these lands on certain specified conditions. These conditions, however, they would by no means accept ; being unaccustomed to acknowledge any superior ; and thinking themselves injured by the king's grant. Words rose high between them and Lord Maxwell ; consultations were holding in his absence ; and the result would certainly have been fatal to him, had not Rolland Beattie of Wetcarrick, a prudent man, warned him of his danger, and mounted him on his " White Mare," which would carry him to a place of safety, in spite of the swiftest pursuit. Maxwell rode directly to Branxholm Castle in Teviotdale, and being disgusted with the ungovernable temper of the Beatties, offered to sell his new estate to the Chief who resided there ;—the ancestor of the Buccleuch family—without, however, promising to put him in possession. Branxholm assented to the proposal, observing, that he could find means of realizing the purchase. Being at the time warden of the middle marches between England and Scotland, he raised his dependants, brought them over to Eskdale, surprised the Beatties, who, nevertheless made a desperate and bloody resistance—expelled them from their ancient inheritance, and apportioned their lands among his followers, reserving only a part to himself. The country people do not fail to remark that the retributive justice of heaven pursued the descendants of Beattie of Wetcarrick, whose selfish prudence had occasioned so much bloodshed. Lord Maxwell, out of gratitude to his preserver,

had secured him a perpetual tenant right to his possession ; but the deed of reservation in his favour was of little avail, misfortune followed misfortune, and the family was at last literary reduced to beggary.

Note 19, Stanza 43.

*Yet did ye mount the steed and bare the brand
When frowned the Gallic victor from afar.*

When the volunteers were embodied during the late war, the Eskdale yeomanry and infantry formed a very distinguished portion of the county defence.

Note 20, Stanza 46.

*To them in peril's hour their chief appealed,
And called their skilful counsels to his aid.*

The capture of the important fortress of Bhurpore in India is here referred to. The allusions in this stanza, and in others which follow it, will be understood—at least in Eskdale. It would be improper, perhaps, to mention names.

MISS W. MALCOLM'S MUSEUM.

Note 1, Page 24.

A fragment of the wreck of Babel's tower.

This is a brick from the ruins of Babylon, obtained by Sir John Malcolm, when envoy from the Indian Government to the Court of Persia. It is composed of hardened clay, of a light ochre colour, thirteen inches square, and three inches in thickness. There is an undeciphered inscription upon it, in the arrow-headed character.

Note 2, Page 25.

*These forms which hold the symbols of command,
Of senseless stone framed by the artist's hand.*

The writer here alludes to a stone from the staircase of Persepolis, the ancient capital of Persia, which was burnt by Alexander the Great. It was procured at no small hazard by the late Lieutenant John Little. Two figures, probably officers of court, or grandees of the empire, are sculptured on it in bas-relief. Each carries a rod in his hand. The stone itself is a greyish marble, about two feet in length, and eighteen inches in breadth.

Note 3, Page 25.

In gorgeous temples on the shores of Nile.

Among a number of curiosities from Egypt, are several images of the ancient divinities, especially of Typhon and Anubis.

Note 4, Page 28.

A Washington or greater Bolivar.

Bolivar emancipated his slaves before he gave freedom to his country.—Washington was a slave-owner till his death.

Note 5, Page 28.

The tale of Mexico's imperial race.

The subject of these lines is a specimen of Mexican hieroglyphics in use before the conquest; obtained from the Archives of Mexico by Don Carlos Parke, and presented by him to Sir Charles Malcolm. The substance on which the hieroglyphics are traced, appears to be the rhind of some tree. They seem to represent a body of men in march, but the figures are drawn in the rudest manner.

Note 6, Page 30.

*Mark here a mouldering relic from the urn
Of him who freedom earned at Bannockburn!*

When the tomb of King Robert Bruce was discovered some years ago at Dunfermline, a small portion of the lead coffin in which the body of the hero was enclosed was sent by the Rev. Peter Chalmers to Miss W. Malcolm's Cottage.

Note 7, Page 30.

*Or in th' Italian's bosom fan the fire,
That warm'd to heroism his Roman sire?*

Poland and (the north of) Italy, suffering under foreign tyranny. *The above verses were written a short time before the Polish insurrection broke out.*

Note 8, Page 31.

To thee hath golden Burmah lent her lore.

“The love of Burmah” is a book consisting of the leaves of the Palmyra tree, on which the characters seem to have been engraved with a style, rather than written with a pen.

CASTLE-O'ER.

Note 1, Page 51.

Marcellus' sword, or heave Cunctator's shield.

Fabius Maximus, designated Cunctator, for his cautious tactics in the war with Hannibal, was called the *shield*, while Marcellus was said to be the *sword* of Rome.

Note 2, Page 54.

Nor may thy bulwarks, Corda !

“ The western tribe of the Selgovae are said to have inhabited Eskdale, Annandale, and Nithsdale, with the part of Galloway as far as the Dee ; and their name is also said to have been derived from a word importing a “ dividing water,” and now softened into the Solway. It is said that three towns belonged to this tribe, within the limits of the present county of Dumfries ;— *Trimontium* at Burnswark, *Uxellum* or Wardlawhill, and *Corda*, now Castleo'er in Eskdale.” (Dr. Singer's Agricultural Survey of Dumfries-shire, page 2, Note.)

Note 3, Page 55.

On Calpe's war-worn cliffs shall cease to wave ?

Calpe—The ancient name of Gibraltar.

THE TRIUMPH OF PLENTY.

Note 1, Page 61.

Wherever the ill-omen'd Raven was rear'd.

The Banner of Hunger.

Note 2, Page 69.

When it bursts o'er Duncarriden's battlements hoar

Duncarriden, a high mountain in ——shire.

BURN AND BYKEN.

Note 1, Page 75.

*They stood in the day of civil broil,
On the war-field side by side,
When the Douglas blood drench'd Arkinholm,
And the foam of the river dyed.*

In the battle of Arkinholm, fought in the immediate neighbourhood of Langholm, and which proved so fatal to the Douglasses, the Beatties of Eskdale particularly distinguished themselves, and contributed greatly to the victory.

FAREWELL TO SNUFF.

Note 1, Page 112.

'Twas thine new life and vigour to infuse.

The last pinch.

Note 2, Page 113.

For ever on his sacerdotal skull.

Certain Philippics against snuff and snuff-takers which appeared in the Dumfries newspapers, are said to have been written by a clergyman. The malediction will not be considered *very* terrible.

VERSES ON THE DEATH OF BOLIVAR.

Note 1, Page 125.

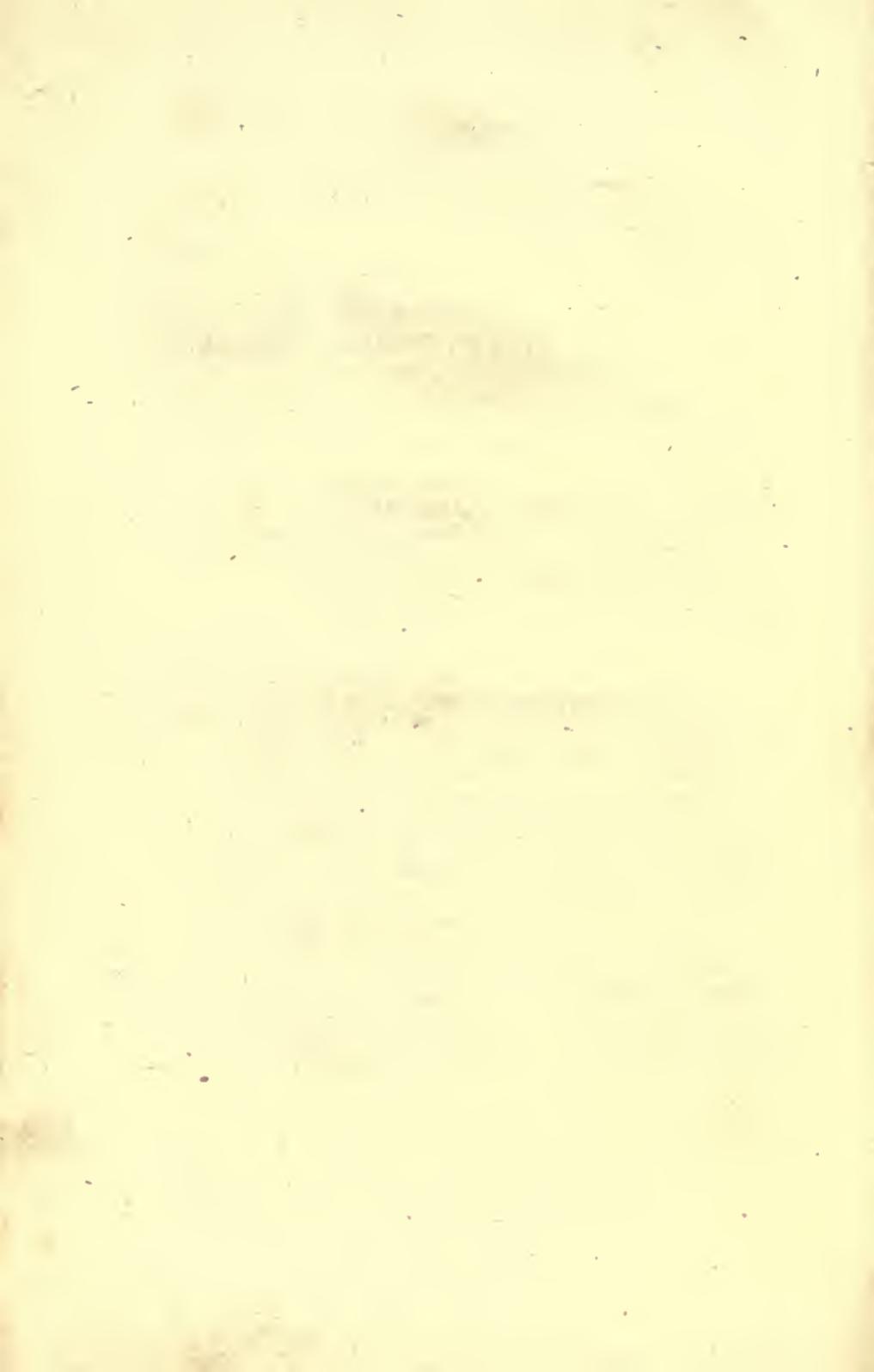
On yonder crime-polluted strand.

These verses were written immediately after the first account of the death of Bolivar reached this country. It was then said that he died in Jamaica.

GLOSSARY TO WINKYN WORDE'S SKULLE.

Page 84.

<i>Bainie</i> , Bony.	<i>Kain</i> , Comb.
<i>Bein</i> , Snug, comfortable.	<i>Lane</i> , Alone.
<i>Bogle</i> , Goblin.	<i>Loanen</i> , Way between two walls.
<i>Brenyelt</i> , Hurried.	<i>Lootit</i> , Stooped.
<i>Braw</i> , Shewy, splendid.	<i>Lown</i> , Calm.
<i>Bush</i> , Dress.	<i>Mirk</i> , Dark.
<i>Darklins</i> , In the dark.	<i>Outowre</i> , Across.
<i>Daurna</i> , Dare not.	<i>Pow</i> , Poll or skull.
<i>Describe</i> , Describe.	<i>Reive</i> , Steal, rob.
<i>Dowie</i> , Cheerless, solitary.	<i>Shaith</i> , Harm.
<i>Dree</i> , Suffer.	<i>Shreiv'd</i> , Ran lightly.
<i>Deidlicht</i> , Meteor preceding a funeral.	<i>Stalwart</i> , Tall, strong.
<i>Eerie</i> , Inspiring, (but generally Possessed with) superstitious dread.	<i>Storknin</i> , Strengthening.
<i>Fash</i> , Meddle with.	<i>Sughs</i> , Whistles.
<i>Fireflaught</i> , Lightning.	<i>Swarf</i> , Swoon.
<i>Gang</i> , Go.	<i>Thruchstane</i> , Horizontal gravestone.
<i>Gaun</i> , Going.	<i>Unloosome</i> , Unpleasant.
<i>Gin</i> , If.	<i>Unsonsie</i> , Unlucky, ominous.
<i>Glaumt</i> , Searched, felt.	<i>Waff</i> , Gentle breeze.
<i>Grew</i> , Greyhound.	<i>Weird</i> , Fate, fortune.
<i>Grippit</i> , Grasped.	<i>Wirrikow</i> , Satan.
<i>Gruwit</i> , Shuddered.	<i>Yowl'd</i> , Howled.



APPENDIX.

POEMS,

BY

MR. WILLIAM PARK, R.N.

EDITOR OF THE ST. GEORGE'S CHRONICLE, GRENADA.

THE following Poems are published rather as a memorial of their author, than as a specimen of his talents in poetical composition, the best of his pieces being now irrecoverably lost. William Park was born at Lambhills, in the parish of Hutton, Annandale, on the first January 1762. Having received a classical education, together with a considerable knowledge of the French language, he, soon after leaving the paternal roof, became secretary to Governor Johnstone of West Florida, grandfather to the present Sir Frederick Johnstone of Westerhall, the Governor being at that time in command of the British squadron off the African coast.

Being left at Lisbon at this period for about a year, he acquired the Portuguese language, and there formed a friendship with his celebrated countryman, William Julius Meikle, the well-known translator of the *Lusiad* of Camoens. He afterwards entered the navy as a midshipman, and served his time in that capacity on board the *Latona* frigate on the West Indian station. Being paid off, and finding but a faint hope of being soon promoted, or soon called upon to serve, he was induced by the late Sir James Johnstone of Westerhall, after having been employed for some time as his secretary, to go as overseer to an estate which had been bequeathed to him on the death of his brother, Colonel Alexander Johnstone, in the island of Grenada. This he accepted, and entered on his functions in 1788. The situation as overseer of slaves, however, but ill accorded with his feeling, manly mind; and after a while, through the friendship and intercession of some of the most eminent merchants in the town of St. George's, he got appointed to a situation in the customs of that port. Here he resided for several years, and became a frequent contributor to, and latterly sole-proprietor of, the *St. George's Chronicle*, to which paper, his knowledge of the French language enabled him to be of great and essential service, in translating advertisements and other intelligence for the behoof of the French inhabitants. With a Mr. Turnbull, a Scottish gentleman, the original proprietor of the *St. George's Chronicle*, he formed the novel and adventurous scheme of publishing in that paper weekly essays after the manner of the *Spectator*, which continued for upwards of a year, under the very unassuming title of the

“ Plagiary,” to amuse and instruct the heterogeneous population of those remote regions. Having become the sole proprietor of the paper, the circulation of which had extended to all the neighbouring islands, its profits, together with his salary from his office in the customs, promised soon to place him in easy, if not independent circumstances ; but the insurrection of the French inhabitants in the disastrous year of 1795, put a period to his life and his usefulness. He fell as he was nobly heading a charge against the insurgents.

Whilst acting as a midshipman in the Latona frigate on the West India station, the officers not unfrequently amused themselves and friends by dramatic representations, and his poetical powers were generally called into requisition for a prologue and epilogue. His wit and vivacity had endeared him to many of his brother officers, and among the rest it may be mentioned with justifiable boast, to our truly patriotic king, who at that time was performing his period of probation as a midshipman. He here received from the Royal Tar a *pledge* of his friendship, which, had providence been pleased to have spared his life, would doubtless have been of some avail to him in the present day. He left an only child, the author of this volume.

STANZAS

ON THE FUNERAL OF GOVERNOR JOHNSTONE.

In solemn cadence tolls the funeral bell,
The pensive mind in deep attention's drown'd,
While echo oft repeats the awful knell,
And lengthens out the melancholy sound.

With tardy steps advance the mournful throng,
To the drear mansions of the silent dead,
And sadly bear the lifeless corse along,
To take possession of its humble bed.

Pass not unheeded this instructive scene,
Ye living this sage lesson now receive,
While yet ye live perform your parts like men,
For short's the time permitted men to live.

See this inanimated lump of clay,
Within this narrow prison now confined,
Devoted to devouring worms a prey,
To mingle with its kindred earth consigned.

Yet this while animated with life's breath,
Directed oft the battle's kindling storm,
Oft braved in Britain's cause the arm of death,
Though clothed in every terror-striking form.

That breast which patriotic virtue fired,
Lies in the cold embraces of the tomb ;
That tongue that listening senates oft admired,
In mournful silence lies for ever dumb.

That bosom where pure friendship's ardent blaze,
The generous flame, alas ! perceives no more ;
That hand's laid low, that liberal oft was raised
To help the injured, to relieve the poor.

See here the wise, the generous, and the brave,
The hero, statesman, and the faithful friend,
Now the sad tenant of this humble grave,
Here rest his toils—here all his labours end.

Tho' sculptured marbles, faithless to their trust,
Soon want the life that they pretend to give,
Tho' mausoleums crumble into dust,
While virtue's loved, his memory shall live.

The patriot firmness of his steady mind,
His warm exertions in his country's cause,
The generous love he bore the human kind,
Shall crown his memory with just applause.

Leave not unheeded the instructive scene,
Ye living, this sage lesson now receive,
While yet ye live perform your parts like men,
For short's the time permitted men to live.

ELEGIAC VERSES WRITTEN AT SEA.

A complete version of the following poem cannot be given, the remainder being lost; the occasion was this: A tyrannical bashaw of a captain commanded the L—— frigate in the West Indies for some time previous to her coming home from that station, and his conduct had been severely satirized some time before by the author, very much to the satisfaction and amusement of all the inferior officers on board, in consequence of which he was confined as a prisoner during the whole of the passage homewards to Plymouth, on which occasion he gave vent to his feelings in the following lines.

Ye whistling winds that murmur through the shrouds,
Ye hollow billows of the sterile main,
Ye stars that dimly twinkle through the clouds,
Thou moon! the fairest of nights sober train,

Oft have ye seen my swelling bosom rise,
And oft been conscious to my falling tears,
Oft have your waves, responsive to my sighs,
With sympathetic whispers sooth'd my ears.

For oft I've mourn'd, in silent grief have mourn'd,
The fate that led me through your wilds to roam ;
Oft have I curs'd the fatal day I scorn'd
The humble pleasures of my rustic home.

But vain ambition, foe to human peace,
Her gawdy bubbles to my eye display'd,
With syren voice cry'd " shun inglorious ease,"
Her syren voice, unthinking, I obey'd.

But ah ! too late th' enchantress' voice I found
Was but a lure th' unwary to decoy,
Too late I found the voice of freedom drown'd,
And, freedom banish'd, who can life enjoy !

Thus the delusive meteor's tempting light
Th' unwary traveller in vain pursues,
Till guided to some precipice's height,
His woeful destiny too late he views.

Had I, contented with my humble lot,
In independence turn'd the furrow'd fields,
I might have tasted, in my humble cot,
Th' unsullied blessings godlike freedom yields.

LINES

WRITTEN ON THE DEATH OF THE LATE MR. WILLIAM
TELFORD, SURGEON, R. N.*

Around yon now deserted lonely walls,
Where solitude and gloomy silence reign,
Each well known scene for sorrow's tribute calls,
And claims the mournful melancholy strain.

* Mr. Telford was a native of Eskdale. His father was a farmer on the estate of Westerhall, much respected by all who knew him, for his piety, integrity, and simplicity of manners. His son received a classical education at the parish school of Westerkirk, then conducted by Mr. Brown, an eminent and very successful teacher of youth, attested by the number of distinguished characters who received the first rudiments of education under his tuition, and who also died in the island of Grenada. Mr. Telford's views were early directed to the study of medicine, and he entered as an apprentice into the shop of the late Dr. Andrew Graham, surgeon in Dalkeith, who was then practising at Langholm and the vicinity. He had only completed the first year of his apprenticeship when the commencement of the revolutionary war in America opened a road to preferment for young men as surgeons in the army and navy. On the recommendation of the late Sir James Johnstone of Westerhall, he went up to

'Tho' unavailing streams the tearful eye,
Tho' unavailing heaves the throbbing heart,
'Tis nature's voice commands the rising sigh,
And friendship bids the tear of sorrow start.

And nature's sacred voice shall be obey'd,
The breast shall heave, the swelling eye o'erflow,
And holy friendship's debts be duly paid,
The tributary drops of heartfelt woe.

No more the tedious moment to beguile,
The pleasing accents of my friend I hear;
No more I see his gay enlivening smile,
The gloom of pensive solitude to cheer.

No more his hand shall minister relief,
Where sickness strews with thorns the weary bed;
No more he'll sooth the friend or parent's grief,
Nor stern disease at his approach recede.

London, was examined by the medical board, and considered qualified to act as surgeon's mate in the navy, and immediately procured an appointment in that capacity to a frigate then fitting out at Portsmouth. He was very soon after made a prisoner on the capture of the vessel, but was quickly exchanged, and appointed to a larger vessel. In the memorable action of Admiral Lord Rodney with the French fleet in the West Indies, he was acting as surgeon to a 74 gun ship of the line. At the peace in 1783 he came home, but afterwards went out to the island of Grenada, where he practised for several years very successfully; but being seized with the fever common in those islands, he died in the prime of life, very much esteemed and greatly lamented by all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance.

No more at friendship's soft endearing call,
His heart with warm benevolence shall glow ;
At pity's shrine no more his tears shall fall,
The cordial balm of sympathetic woe.

Each charin that gentle manners could impart,
To manly fortitude of soul he join'd,
And all or lov'd the goodness of his heart,
Or priz'd the steady firmness of his mind.

Such Telford was—by all who knew him lov'd,
(I found him such by long experience try'd,)
Thro' every varied scene of life approv'd ;
He liv'd respected, and lamented died.

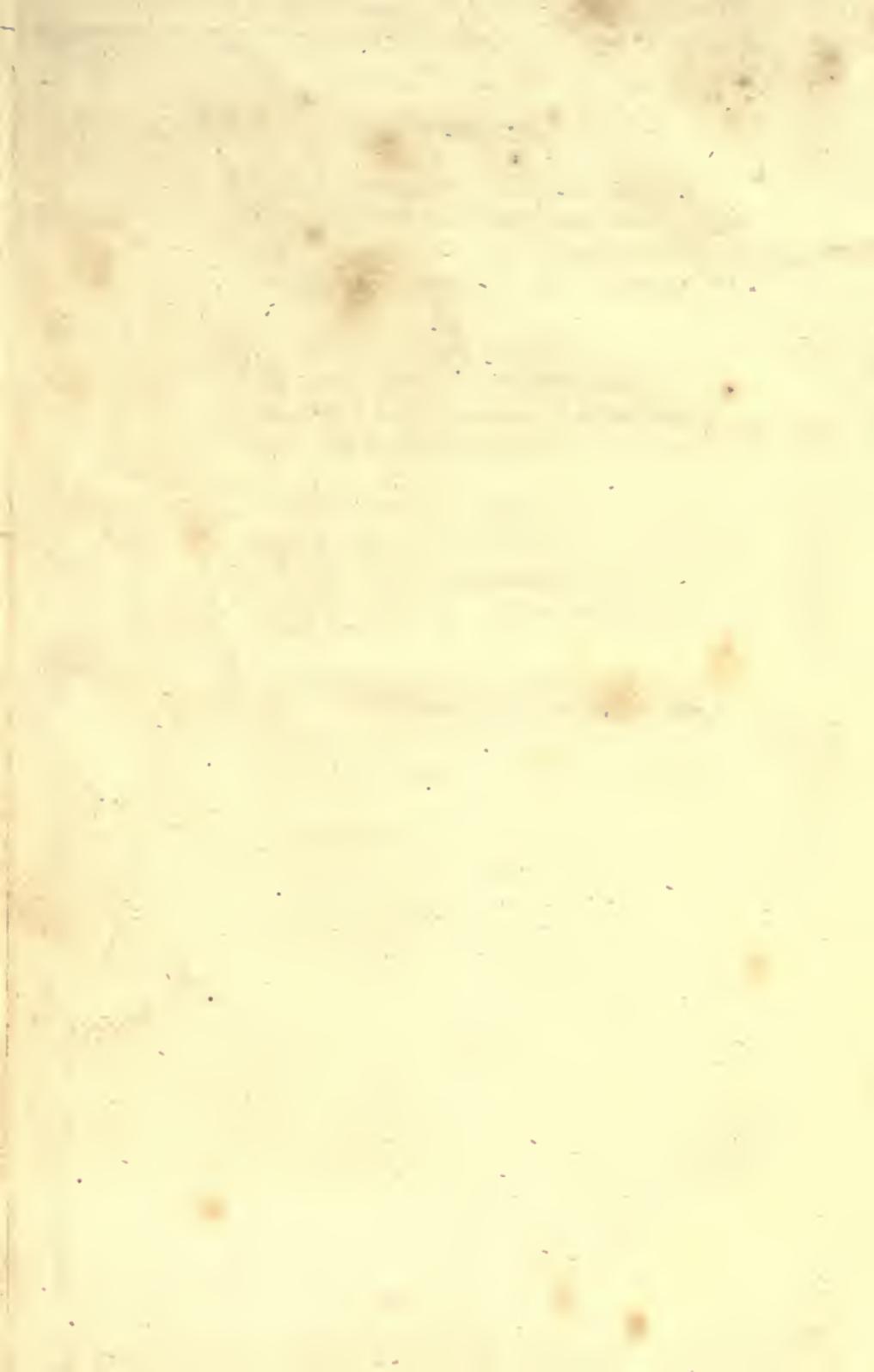
What though no sculptur'd marble grace his tomb,
Nor blazon'd honours o'er his ashes rise ;
What though no bard lament his early doom,
Whose song the frown of conquering time defies,—

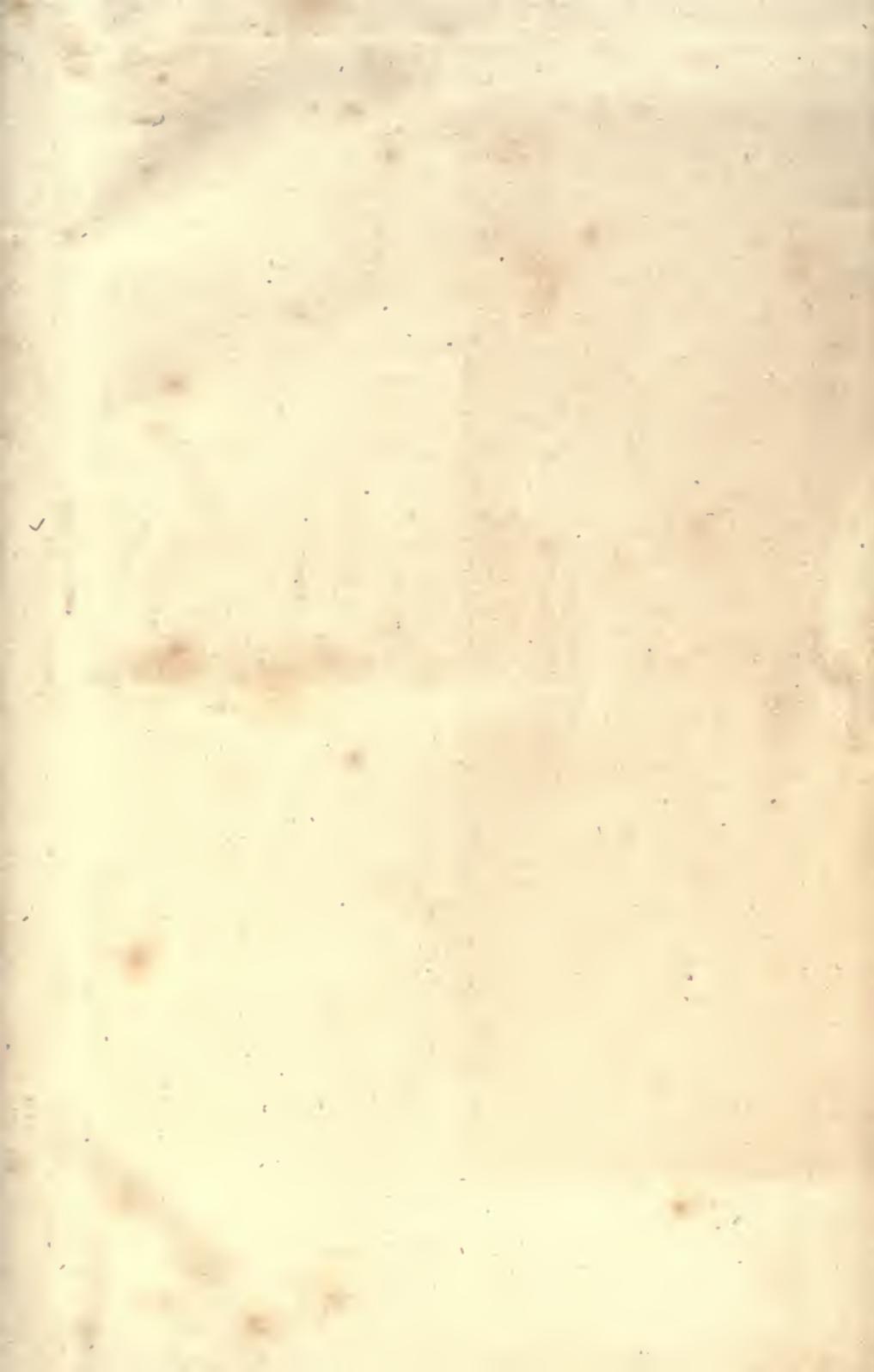
In ev'ry breast where virtue claims regard,
His memory a monument shall find,
Nor wants his worth the labours of the bard
To print it on the good and generous mind.

THE END.

ERRATUM.

Page 16, stanza 45, line 4, *for that* read *than*.







PR Park, William
5119 The vale of Esk
P3V3

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